

THE ALHAMBRA;

OR,

THE NEW SKETCH BOOK.

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THE
ALHAMBRA;
OR THE
NEW SKETCH BOOK.

BY
WASHINGTON IRVING.



VOLUME I.



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TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ. R.A.

MY DEAR SIR ,

You may remember , that in the rambles we once took together about some of the old cities of Spain , particularly Toledo and Seville , we remarked a strong mixture of the Saracenic with the Gothic , remaining from the time of the Moors ; and were more than once struck with scenes and incidents in the streets , which reminded us of passages in the « Arabian Nights. » You then urged me to write something that should illustrate those peculiarities , « something in the Haroun Alraschid style , » that Arabian spice which pervades everything in Spain. I call this to your mind to show you are , in some degree , responsible for the present work , in which I have given a few « Arabesque » sketches from the life , and tales founded on popular traditions , which were chiefly struck off during a residence in one of the most Morisco-Spanish places in the Peninsula.

I inscribe these pages to you as a memorial of the pleasant scenes we have witnessed together in that land of adventure , and as a testimonial of an esteem for your worth which is only exceeded by admiration of your talents.

Your friend and fellow-traveller,

THE AUTHOR.

MAY , 1852.

TO DAVID WILLIAMS, M.D.

1844

My dear Sir,
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the matter of the
of the same, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
J. H. Williams

THE EDITOR

1844

THE ALHAMBRA;

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THE JOURNEY.

In the Spring of 1829 , the Author of this Work , whom curiosity had brought into Spain , made a rambling expedition from Seville to Granada in company with a friend , a member of the Russian embassy at Madrid. Accident had thrown us together from distant regions of the globe , and a similarity of taste led us to wander together among the romantic mountains of Andalusia. Should these pages meet his eye , wherever thrown by the duties of his station , whether mingling in the pageantry of courts , or meditating on the truer glories of Nature , may they recall the scenes of our adventurous companionship , and with them the remembrance of one , in whom neither time nor distance will obliterate the remembrance of his gentleness and worth !

And here , before setting forth , let me indulge in a few previous remarks on Spanish scenery and Spanish travelling. Many are apt to picture Spain to their imaginations as a soft southern region , decked out with all the luxuriant charms of voluptuous Italy. On the contrary , though there are exceptions in some of the maritime provinces , yet , for the greater part , it is a stern , melancholy country , with rugged mountains , and long

sweeping plains , destitute of trees , and indescribably silent and lonesome , partaking of the savage and solitary character of Africa. What adds to this silence and loneliness , is the absence of singing-birds , a natural consequence of the want of groves and hedges. The vulture and the eagle are seen wheeling about the mountain-cliffs , and soaring over the plains , and groups of shy bustards stalk about the heaths ; but the myriads of smaller birds , which animate the whole face of other countries , are met with in but few provinces in Spain , and in those chiefly among the orchards and gardens which surround the habitations of man.

In the interior provinces the traveller occasionally traverses great tracts cultivated with grain as far as the eye can reach , waving at times with verdure , at other times naked and sunburnt , but he looks round in vain for the hand that has tilled the soil. At length , he perceives some village on a steep hill , or rugged crag , with mouldering battlements and ruined watch-tower ; a stronghold , in old times , against civil war , or Moorish inroad ; for the custom among the peasantry of congregating together for mutual protection , is still kept up in most parts of Spain ; in consequence of the maraudings of roving freebooters.

But though a great part of Spain is deficient in the garniture of groves and forests , and the softer charms of ornamental cultivation , yet its scenery has something of a high and lofty character to compensate the want. It partakes something of the attributes of its people ; and I think that I better understand the proud, hardy, frugal, and abstemious Spaniard , his manly defiance of hardships , and contempt of effeminate indulgences , since I have seen the country he inhabits.

There is something , too , in the sternly simple features of the Spanish landscape , that impresses on the soul a feeling of sublimity. The immense plains of the Castiles and of La Mancha , extending as far as the eye can reach , derive an interest from their very nakedness and immensity , and have something of the solemn gran-

deur of the ocean. In ranging over these boundless wastes, the eye catches sight here and there of a straggling herd of cattle attended by a lonely herdsman, motionless as a statue, with his long slender pike tapering up like a lance into the air; or, beholds a long train of mules slowly moving along the waste like a train of camels in the desert; or, a single herdsman, armed with blunderbuss and stiletto, and prowling over the plain. Thus the country, the habits, the very looks of the people, have something of the Arabian character. The general insecurity of the country is evinced in the universal use of weapons. The herdsman in the field, the shepherd in the plain, has his musket and his knife. The wealthy villager rarely ventures to the market-town without his trabuco, and, perhaps, a servant on foot with a blunderbuss on his shoulder, and the most petty journey is undertaken with the preparation of a warlike enterprise.

The dangers of the road produce also a mode of travelling, resembling, on a diminutive scale, the caravans of the East. The arrieros, or carriers, congregate in convoys, and set off in large and well-armed trains on appointed days; while additional travellers swell their number, and contribute to their strength. In this primitive way is the commerce of the country carried on. The muleteer is the general medium of traffic, and the legitimate traverser of the land; crossing the Peninsula from the Pyrenees and the Asturias to the Alpuxarras, the Serrania de Ronda, and even to the gates of Gibraltar. He lives frugally and hardily; his alforjas of coarse cloth hold his scanty stock of provisions; a leathern bottle, hanging at his saddle-bow, contains wine or water, for a supply across barren mountains and thirsty plains. A mule-cloth spread upon the ground, is his bed at night and his pack-saddle is his pillow. His low, but clean-limbed and sinewy form, betokens strength; his complexion is dark and sunburnt; his eye resolute, but quiet in its expression, except when kindled by sudden emotion; his demeanour is frank, manly, and courteous, and he never passes you without a grave saluta-

tion : « Dios guarde á usted ! » « Va usted con Dios, Caballero ! » « God guard you ! God be with you , Cavalier ! »

As these men have often their whole fortune at stake upon the burthen of their mules , they have their weapons at hand , slung to their saddles , and ready to be snatched out for desperate defence. But their united numbers render them secure against petty bands of marauders ; and the solitary bandolero , armed to the teeth , and mounted on his Andalusian steed , hovers about them , like a pirate about a merchant convoy , without daring to make an assault.

The Spanish muleteer has an inexhaustible stock of songs and ballads , with which to beguile his incessant wayfaring. The airs are rude and simple , consisting of but few inflexions. These he chaunts forth with a loud voice , and long , drawling cadence , seated sideways on his mule , who seems to listen with infinite gravity , and to keep time , with his paces , to the tune. The couplets thus chaunted , are often old traditional romances about the Moors , or some legend of a saint , or some love-ditty ; or what is still more frequent , some ballad about a bold contrabandista , or hardy bandolero , for the smuggler and the robber are poetical heroes among the common people of Spain. Often , the song of the muleteer is composed at the instant , and relates to some local scene , or some incident of the journey. This talent of singing and improvising is frequent in Spain , and is said to have been inherited from the Moors. There is something wildly pleasing in listening to these ditties among the rude and lonely scenes that they illustrate ; accompanied , as they are , by the occasional jingle of the mulebell.

It has a most picturesque effect , also , to meet a train of muleteers in some mountain-pass. First you hear the bells of the leading mules , breaking with their simple melody the stillness of the airy height ; or , perhaps , the voice of the muleteer admonishing some tardy or wandering animal , or chaunting , at the full stretch of his lungs , some traditionary ballad. At length you

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see the mules slowly winding along the cragged defile, sometimes descending precipitous cliffs, so as to present themselves in full relief against the sky, sometimes toiling up the deep arid chasms below you. As they approach, you descry their gay decorations of worsted tufts, tassels, and saddle-cloths; while, as they pass by, the ever-ready trabuco slung behind the packs and saddles, gives a hint of the insecurity of the road.

The ancient kingdom of Granada, into which we are about to penetrate, is one of the most mountainous regions of Spain. Vast sierras, or chains of mountains, destitute of shrub or tree, and mottled with variegated marbles and granites, elevate their sun-burnt summits against a deep-blue sky; yet in their rugged bosoms lie engulfed the most verdant and fertile valleys, where the desert and the garden strain for mastery, and the very rock is, as it were, compelled to yield the fig, the orange, and the citron, and to blossom with the myrtle and the rose.

In the wild passes of these mountains the sight of walled towns and villages, built like eagles' nests among the cliffs, and surrounded by Moorish battlements, or of ruined watch-towers perched on lofty peaks, carries the mind back to the chivalric days of Christian and Moslem warfare, and to the romantic struggle for the conquest of Granada. In traversing these lofty sierras, the traveller is often obliged to alight and lead his horse up and down the steep and jagged ascents and descents, resembling the broken steps of a staircase. Sometimes the road winds along dizzy precipices, without parapet to guard him from the gulfs below, and then will plunge down steep, and dark, and dangerous declivities. Sometimes it straggles through rugged barrancos, or ravines, worn by winter torrents, the obscure path of the contrabandista; while, ever and anon, the ominous cross, the monument of robbery and murder, erected on a mound of stones at some lonely part of the road, admonishes the traveller that he is among the haunts of banditti, perhaps at that very moment under the eye of

some lurking bandolero. Sometimes, in winding through the narrow valleys, he is startled by a hoarse bellowing, and beholds above him, on some green fold of the mountain side, a herd of fierce Andalusian bulls, destined for the combat of the arena. There is something awful in the contemplation of these terrific animals, clothed with tremendous strength, and ranging their native pastures in untamed wildness, strangers almost to the face of man: they know no one but the solitary herdsman who attends upon them, and even he at times dares not venture to approach them. The low bellowing of these bulls, and their menacing aspect as they look down from their rocky height, give additional wildness to the savage scenery around.

I have been betrayed unconsciously into a longer disquisition than I had intended, on the general features of Spanish travelling; but there is a romance about all the recollections of the Peninsula, that is dear to the imagination.

It was on the first of May that my companion and myself set forth from Seville on our route to Granada. We had made all due preparations for the nature of our journey, which lay through mountainous regions, where the roads are little better than mere mule-paths, and too frequently beset by robbers. The most valuable part of our luggage had been forwarded by the arrieros; we retained merely clothing and necessaries for the journey, and money for the expenses of the road, with a sufficient surplus of the latter to satisfy the expectations of robbers should we be assailed, and to save ourselves from the rough treatment that awaits the too wary and empty-handed traveller. A couple of stout hired steeds were provided for ourselves, and a third for our scanty luggage, and for the conveyance of a sturdy Biscayan lad of about twenty years of age, who was to guide us through the perplexed mazes of the mountain roads, to take care of the horses, to act occasionally as our valet, and at all times as our guard; for he had a formidable trabuco or carbine, to defend us from rateros, or soli-

tary footpads, about which weapon he made much vain-glorious boast, though, to the discredit of his generalship, I must say that it generally hung unloaded behind his saddle. He was, however, a faithful, cheery, kind-hearted creature, full of saws and proverbs as that miracle of squires the renowned Sancho himself, whose name we bestowed upon him; and, like a true Spaniard, though treated by us with companionable familiarity, he never for a moment, in his utmost hilarity, overstepped the bounds of respectful decorum.

Thus equipped and attended, we set out on our journey, with a genuine disposition to be pleased. With such a disposition, what a country is Spain for a traveller, where the most miserable inn is as full of adventure as an enchanted castle; and every meal is in itself an achievement! Let others repine at the lack of turnpike-roads and sumptuous hotels, and all the elaborate comforts of a country cultivated into tameness and common-place; but give me the rude mountain scramble, the roving, hap-hazard wayfaring, the frank, hospitable, though half-wild manners, that give such a true game flavour to romantic Spain!

Our first evening's entertainment had a relish of the kind. We arrived after sunset at a little town, among the hills, after a fatiguing journey over a wide houseless plain, where we had been repeatedly drenched with showers. In the inn were a party of Miqueletes, who were patrolling the country in pursuit of robbers. The appearance of foreigners like ourselves, was unusual in this remote town; mine host, with two or three old gossiping comrades in brown cloaks, studied our passports in a corner of the posada, while an Alguazil took notes by the dim light of a lamp. The passports were in foreign languages and perplexed them, but our Squire Sancho assisted them in their studies, and magnified our importance with the grandiloquence of a Spaniard. In the meantime, the magnificent distribution of a few cigars had won the hearts of all around us; in a little while the whole community see-

med put in agitation to make us welcome. The corregidor himself waited upon us, and a great, rush-bottomed arm-chair was ostentatiously bolstered into our room by our landlady, for the accommodation of that important personage. The commander of the patrol took supper with us; a lively, talking, laughing Andaluz, who had made a campaign in South America, and recounted his exploits in love and war with much pomp of phrase, vehemence of gesticulation, and mysterious the robbers in rolling of the eye. He told us that he had a list of all the country, and meant to ferret out every mother's son of them; he offered us at the same time some of his soldiers as an escort. « One is enough to protect you, Señors; the robbers know me and know my men; the sight of one is enough to spread terror through a whole sierra. » We thanked him for his offer, but assured him in his own strain, that with the protection of our redoubtable Squire, Sancho, we were not afraid of all the ladrones of Andalusia.

While we were supping with our Drawcansir friend, we heard the notes of a guitar, and the click of castañets, and presently a chorus of voices singing a popular air. In fact mine host had gathered together the amateur singers and musicians, and the rustic belles of the neighbourhood, and on going forth, the court-yard of the inn presented a scene of true Spanish festivity. We took our seats with mine host and hostess and the commander of the patrol, under the archway of the court; the guitar passed from hand to hand, but a jovial shoe-maker was the Orpheus of the place. He was a pleasant-looking fellow, with huge black whiskers; his sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, he touched the guitar with masterly skill, and sang little amorous ditties with an expressive leer at the women, with whom he was evidently a favourite. He afterwards danced a fandango with a buxom Andalusian damsel, to the great delight of the spectators. But none of the females present could compare with mine host's pretty daughter, Pepita, who had slipped away and made her toilette for the occasion, and

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had covered her head with roses ; and who distinguished herself in a bolero with a handsome young dragoon. We had ordered our host to let wine and refreshment circulate freely among the company , yet , though there was a motley assembly of soldiers , muleteers , and villagers , no one exceeded the bounds of sober enjoyment. The scene was a study for a painter : the picturesque group of dancers , the troopers in their half military dresses , the peasantry wrapped in their brown cloaks ; nor must I omit to mention the old meagre Alguazil , in a short black cloak , who took no notice of anything going on , but sat in a corner diligently writing by the dim light of a huge copper lamp , that might have figured in the days of Don Quixote.

I am not writing a regular narrative , and do not pretend to give the varied events of several days' rambling , over hill and dale , and moor and mountain. We travelled in true contrabandista style , taking every thing , rough and smooth , as we found it , and mingling with all classes and conditions in a kind of vagabond companionship. It is the true way to travel in Spain. Knowing the scanty larders of the inns , and the naked tracts of country which the traveller has often to traverse , we had taken care , on starting , to have the alforjas , or saddle-bags , of our Squire , well stocked with cold provisions , and his bota , or leathern bottle , which was of portly dimensions , filled to the neck with choice Valdepenas wine. As this was a munition for our campaign more important than even his trabuco , we exhorted him to have an eye to it ; and I will do him the justice to say that his namesake , the trencher-loving Sancho himself , could not excel him as a provident purveyor. Though the alforjas and bota were repeatedly and vigorously assailed throughout the journey , they appeared to have a miraculous property of being never empty ; for our vigilant Squire took care to sack every thing that remained from our evening repasts at the inns , to supply our next day's luncheon.

What luxurious noontide repasts have we made , on

the green sward by the side of a brook or fountain , under a shady tree ! and then what delicious siestas on our cloaks , spread out on the herbage !

We paused one day at noon , for a repast of the kind. It was in a pleasant little green meadow , surrounded by hills covered with olive-trees. Our cloaks were spread on the grass under an elm-tree , by the side of a bubbling rivulet ; our horses were tethered where they might crop the herbage ; and Sancho produced his alforjas with an air of triumph. They contained the contributions of four days' journeying , but had been signally enriched by the foraging of the previous evening in a plenteous inn at Antequera. Our Squire drew forth the heterogeneous contents , one by one , and these seemed to have no end. First came forth a shoulder of roasted kid , very little the worse for wear ; then an entire partridge ; then a great morsel of salted codfish wrapped in paper ; then the residue of a ham ; then the half of a pullet , together with several rolls of bread , and a rabble rout of oranges , figs , raisins , and walunts. His bota also had been recruited with some excellent wine of Malaga. At every fresh apparition from his larder , he would enjoy our ludicrous surprise , throwing himself back on the grass , and shouting with laughter. Nothing pleased the simple-hearted varlet more than to be compared , for his devotion to the trencher , to the renowned Squire of Don Quixote. He was well versed in the history of the Don , and , like most of the common people of Spain , he firmly believed it to be a true history.

« All that, however, happened a long time ago, señor? » said he to me one day , with an inquiring look.

« A very long time , » was the reply.

« I dare say more than a thousand years? » still looking dubiously.

« I dare say , not less. »

The Squire was satisfied.

As we were making the repast , above described , and , diverting ourselves with the simple drollery of our Squire , a solitary beggar approached us , who had almost the look

of a pilgrim. He was evidently very old, with a grey beard, and supported himself on a staff, yet age had not bowed him down; he was tall and erect, and had the wreck of a fine form. He wore a round Andalusian hat, a sheep-skin jacket, and leathern breeches, gaiters and sandals. His dress, though old and patched, was decent, his demeanour manly, and he addressed us with that grave courtesy that is to be remarked in the lowest Spaniard. We were in a favourable mood for such a visitor; and, in a freak of capricious charity, gave him some silver, a loaf of fine wheaten bread, and a goblet of our choice wine of Malaga. He received them thankfully, but without any grovelling tribute of gratitude. Tasting the wine, he held it up to the light, with a slight beam of surprise in his eye; then quaffing it off at a draught, « It is many years, » said he, « since I have tasted such wine. It is a cordial to an old man's heart. » Then, looking at the beautiful wheaten loaf, « *bendito sea tal pan!* » « blessed be such bread! » So saying, he put it in his wallet. We urged him to eat it on the spot. « No, señors, » replied he, « the wine I had to drink or leave; but the bread I must take home to share with my family. »

Our man Sancho sought our eye, and reading permission there, gave the old man some of the ample fragments of our repast; on condition, however, that he should sit down and make a meal.

He accordingly took his seat at some little distance from us, and began to eat slowly and with a sobriety and decorum that would have become an hidalgo. There was altogether a measured manner and a quiet self-possession about the old man, that made me think he had seen better days: his language, too, though simple, had occasionally something picturesque and almost poetical in the phraseology. I set him down for some broken-down cavalier. I was mistaken; it was nothing but the innate courtesy of a Spaniard, and the poetical turn of thought and language often to be found in the lowest classes of this clear-witted people. For fifty years, he had been a shepherd,

but now he was out of employ, and destitute, « When I was a young man, » said he, « nothing could harm or trouble me ; I was always well, always gay ; but now I am seventy-nine years of age, and a beggar, and my heart begins to fail me. »

Still he was not a regular mendicant : it was not until recently that want had driven him to this degradation ; and he gave a touching picture of the struggle between hunger and pride, when abject destitution first came upon him. He was returning from Malaga without money ; he had not tasted food for some time, and was crossing one of the great plains of Spain, where there were but few habitations. When almost dead with hunger, he applied at the door of a venta or country inn. « *Perdone usted por Dios hermano !* » (Excuse us, brother, for God's sake !) was the reply—the usual mode in Spain of refusing a beggar. « I turned away, » said he, « with shame greater than my hunger, for my heart was yet too proud. I came to a river with high banks and deep rapid current, and felt tempted to throw myself in : ‘What should such an old, worthless, wretched man as I live for?’ But when I was on the brink of the current, I thought on the Blessed Virgin, and turned away. I travelled on until I saw a country-seat at a little distance from the road, and entered the outer gate of the court-yard. The door was shut, but there were two young señoras at a window. I approached and begged : — ‘*Perdone usted por Dios hermano?*’ (Excuse us, brother, for God's sake !) and the window closed. I crept out of the court-yard, but hunger overcame me, and my heart gave way : I thought my hour at hand, so I laid myself down at the gate, commended myself to the Holy Virgin, and covered my head to die. In a little while afterwards, the master of the house came home : seeing me lying at his gate, he uncovered my head, had pity on my grey hairs, took me into his house, and gave me food. So, señors, you see that one should always put confidence in the protection of the Virgin. »

The old man was on his way to his native place,

Archidona, which was close by, on the summit of a steep and rugged mountain. He pointed to the ruins of its old Moorish castle : « That castle, » he said, « was inhabited by a Moorish king at the time of the wars of Granada. Queen Isabella invaded it with a great army ; but the king looked down from his castle among the clouds, and laughed her to scorn ! Upon this the Virgin appeared to the queen, and guided her army up a mysterious path in the mountains, which had never before been known. When the Moor saw her coming, he was astonished, and springing with his horse from a precipice, was dashed to pieces ! The marks of his horse's hoofs, » said the old man, « are to be seen in the margin of the rock to this day. And see, señors, yonder is the road by which the queen and her army mounted : you see it like a riband up the mountain side ; but the miracle is, that, though it can be seen at a distance, when you come near, it disappears ! »

The ideal road to which he pointed was undoubtedly a sandy ravine of the mountain, which looked narrow and defined at a distance, but became broad and indistinct on an approach.

As the old man's heart warmed with wine and wassail, he went on to tell us a story of the buried treasure left under the castle by the moorish king. His own house was next to the foundations of the castle. The curate and notary dreamed three times of the treasure, and went to work at the place pointed out in their dreams. His own son-in-law heard the sound of their pick-axes and spades at night. What they found nobody knows, they became suddenly rich, but kept their own secret. Thus the old man had once been next door to fortune, but was doomed never to get under the same roof.

I have remarked, that the stories of treasure buried by the Moors, which prevail throughout Spain, are most current among the poorest people. It is thus, kind Nature consoles with shadows for the lack of substantials. The thirsty man dreams of fountains and running-streams ; the hungry man of ideal banquets ; and the

poor man of heaps of hidden gold : nothing certainly is more magnificent than the imagination of a beggar.

The last travelling sketch I shall give , is an evening scene at the little city of Loxa. This was a famous belligerent frontier post in the time of the Moors , and repulsed Ferdinand from its walls. It was the stronghold of old Aliatac , the father-in-law of Boabdil ; when that fiery veteran sallied forth with his son-in-law on their disastrous inroad , that ended in the death of the chieftain and the capture of the monarch. Loxa is wildly situated in a broken mountain-pass , on the banks of the Genil , among rocks and groves , and meadows and gardens. The people seem still to retain the bold fiery spirit of the olden time. Our inn was suited to the place. It was kept by a young and handsome Andalusian widow , whose trim *basquiña* of black silk , fringed with bugles , set off the play of a graceful form and round pliant limbs. Her step was firm and elastic ; her dark eye was full of fire , and the coquetry of her air , and varied ornaments of her person , showed that she was accustomed to be admired.

She was well matched by a brother , nearly about her own age ; they were perfect models of the Andalusian *Majo* and *Maja*. He was tall , vigorous , and well-formed , with a clear olive-complexion , a dark beaming eye , and curling chesnut whiskers that met under his chin. He was gallantly dressed in a short green velvet jacket , fitted to his shape , profusely decorated with silver buttons , with a white handkerchief in each pocket. He had breeches of the same , with rows of buttons from the hips to the knees ; a pink silk handkerchief round his neck , gathered through a ring , on the bosom of a neatly-plaited shirt ; a sash round the waist to match ; *bottinas* , or spatterdashes , of the finest russet-leather , elegantly worked , and open at the calf to show his stocking ; and russet-shoes , setting off a well-shaped foot.

As he was standing at the door , a horseman rode up and entered into low and earnest conversation with him. He was dressed in similar style , and almost with equal

finery ; a man about thirty , square-built , with strong Roman features , handsome , though slightly pitted with the small-pox ; with a free , bold , and somewhat daring air. His powerful black horse was decorated with tassels and fanciful trappings , and a couple of broad-mouthed blunderbusses hung behind the saddle. He had the air of one of those contrabandistas that I have seen in the mountains of La Ronda , and evidently had a good understanding with the brother of mine hostess ; nay , if I mistake not , he was a favoured admirer of the widow. In fact , the whole inn and its inmates had something of a contrabandista aspect , and the blunderbuss stood in a corner beside the guitar. The horseman I have mentioned , passed his evening in the posada , and sang several bold mountain romances with great spirit. As we were at supper , two poor Asturians put-in in distress , begging food and a night's lodging. They had been waylaid by robbers as they came from a fair among the mountains , robbed of a horse , which carried all their stock in trade , stripped of their money and most of their apparel , beaten for having offered resistance , and left almost naked in the road. My companion , with a prompt generosity , natural to him , ordered them a supper and a bed , and gave them a sum of money to help them forward towards their home.

As the evening advanced , the dramatis personæ thickened. A large man , about sixty years of age , of powerful frame , came strolling in , to gossip with mine hostess. He was dressed in the ordinary Andalusian costume , but had a huge sabre tucked under his arm ; wore large moustaches , and had something of a lofty swaggering air. Every one seemed to regard him with great deference.

Our man Sancho whispered to us that he was Don Ventura Rodriguez , the hero and champion of Loxa , famous for his prowess and the strength of his arm. In the time of the French invasion he surprised six troopers who were asleep : he first secured their horses , then attacked them with his sabre , killed some , and

took the rest prisoners. For this exploit the king allows him a peseta (the fifth of a duro, or dollar) per day, and has dignified him with the title of Don.

I was amused to notice his swelling language and demeanour. He was evidently a thorough Andalusian, boastful as he was brave. His sabre was always in his hand or under his arm. He carries it always about with him as a child does her doll, calls it his Santa Teresa, and says that when he draws it, « Trembla la Tierra! »—the earth trembles!

I sat until a late hour listening to the-varied themes of this motley group, who mingled together with the unreserve of a Spanish posada. We had contrabandista songs, stories of robbers, guerilla exploits, and Moorish legends. The last were from our handsome landlady, who gave a poetical account of the Infiernos, or infernal regions of Loxa—dark caverns, in which subterranean streams and waterfalls make a mysterious sound. The common people say that there are money-coiners shut up there from the time of the Moors; and that the Moorish kings kept their treasures in those caverns.

Were it the purport of this work, I could fill its pages with the incidents and scenes of our rambling expedition; but other themes invite me. Journeying in this manner, we at length emerged from the mountains, and entered upon the beautiful Vega of Granada. Here we took our last midday's repast under a grove of olive-trees, on the borders of a rivulet, with the old Moorish capital in the distance, and animated by the ruddy towers of the Alhambra: while, far above it, the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada shone like silver. The day was without a cloud, and the heat of the sun tempered by cool breezes from the mountains; after our repast, we spread our cloaks and took our last siesta, lulled by the humming of bees among the flowers, and the notes of ring-doves from the neighbouring olive-trees. When the sultry hours were past, we resumed our journey; and after passing between hedges of aloes and Indian figs, and through a wilderness of gardens, arrived, about sunset, at the Gates of Granada.

To the traveller imbued with a feeling for the historical and poetical, the Alhambra of Granada is as much an object of veneration, as is the Kaaba, or sacred house of Mecca, to all true Moslem pilgrims. How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous; how many songs and romances, Spanish and Arabian, of love, and chivalry, are associated with this romantic pile! The reader may judge, therefore, of our delight, when, shortly after our arrival in Granada, the Governor of the Alhambra gave us his permission to occupy his vacant apartments in the Moorish palace. My companion was soon summoned away by the duties of his station; but I remained for several months, spell-bound in the old enchanted pile. The following papers are the result of my reveries and researches during that delicious thralldom. If they have the power of imparting any of the witching charms of the place to the imagination of the reader, he will not repine at lingering with me for a season in the legendary halls of the Alhambra.

GOVERNMENT OF THE ALHAMBRA.

The Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise, and made their last stand for empire in Spain. The palace occupies but a portion of the fortress, the walls of which, studded with towers, stretch irregularly round the whole crest of a lofty hill that over-looks the city, and forms a spur of the Sierra Nevada, or snowy mountain.

In the time of the Moors, the fortress was capable of containing an army of forty thousand men within its

precincts, and served occasionally as a stronghold of the sovereigns against their rebellious subjects. After the kingdom had passed into the hands of the Christians, the Alhambra continued a royal demesne, and was occasionally inhabited by the Castilian monarchs. The Emperor Charles V. began a sumptuous palace within its walls, but was deterred from completing it by repeated shocks of earthquakes. The last royal residents were Philip V. and his beautiful queen Elisabetta of Parma, early in the eighteenth century. Great preparations were made for their reception. The palace and gardens were placed in a state of repair, and a new suite of apartments erected, and decorated by artists brought from Italy. The sojourn of the sovereigns was transient, and after their departure the palace once more became desolate. Still the place was maintained with some military state. The governor held it immediately from the crown, its jurisdiction extended down into the city, and was independent of the Captain General of Granada. A considerable garrison was kept up, the governor had his apartments in the front of the old Moorish palace, and never descended into Granada without some parade. The fortress in fact was a little town of itself, having several streets of houses within its walls, together with a Franciscan convent and a parochial church.

The desertion of the court, however, was a fatal blow to the Alhambra. Its beautiful halls became desolate, and some of them fell to ruin; the gardens were destroyed, and the fountains ceased to play. By degrees the dwellings became filled up with a loose and lawless population; contrabandistas, who availed themselves of its independent jurisdiction to carry on a wide and daring course of smuggling, and thieves and rogues of all sorts, who made this their place of refuge from whence they might depredate upon Granada and its vicinity. The strong arm of government at length interfered: the whole community was thoroughly sifted; none were suffered to remain but such as were of honest character, and had legitimate right to a residence; the greater part of

the houses were demolished, and a mere hamlet left, with the parochial church and the Franciscan convent. During the recent troubles in Spain, when Granada was in the hands of the French, the Alhambra was garrisoned by their troops, and the palace was occasionally inhabited by the French commander. With that enlightened taste which has ever distinguished the French nation in their conquests, this monument of Moorish elegance and grandeur was rescued from the absolute ruin and desolation that were overwhelming it. The roofs were repaired, the saloons and galleries protected from the weather, the gardens cultivated, the water-courses restored, the fountains once more made to throw up their sparkling showers; and Spain may thank her invaders for having preserved to her the most beautiful and interesting of her historical monuments.

On the departure of the French they blew up several towers of the outer wall, and left the fortifications scarcely tenable. Since that time the military importance of the post is at an end. The garrison is a handful of invalid soldiers, whose principal duty is to guard some of the outer towers, which serve occasionally all a prison of state; and the governor, abandoning the lofty hill of the Alhambra, resides in the centre of Granada, for the more convenient dispatch of his official duties. I cannot conclude this brief notice of the state of the fortress without bearing testimony to the honourable exertions of its present commander, Don Francisco de Serna, who is tasking all the limited resources at his command to put the palace in a state of repair, and, by his judicious precautions, has for some time arrested its too certain decay. Had his predecessors discharged the duties of their station with equal fidelity, the Alhambra might yet have remained in almost its pristine beauty: were government to second him with means equal to his zeal, this edifice might still be preserved to adorn the land, and to attract the curious and enlightened of every clime for many generations.

INTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA.

The Alhambra has been so often and so minutely described by travellers, that a mere sketch will, probably, be sufficient for the reader to refresh his recollection ; I will give, therefore, a brief account of our visit to it the morning after our arrival in Granada.

Leaving our posada of La Espada, we traversed the renowned square of the Vivarrambla, once the scene of Moorish jousts and tournaments, now a crowded market-place. From thence we proceeded along the Zacatin, the main street of what, in the time of the Moors, was the Great Bazaar, where the small shops and narrow alleys still retain the Oriental character. Crossing an open place in front of the Palace of the Captain-General, we ascended a confined and winding street, the name of which reminded us of the chivalric days of Granada. It is called the Calle, or street of the Gomeres, from a Moorish family famous in chronicle and song. This street led up to a massive gateway of Grecian architecture built by Charles V., forming the entrance to the domains of the Alhambra.

At the gate were two or three ragged and superannuated soldiers, dozing on a stone bench, the successors of the Zegrís and the Abencerrages ; while a tall meagre varlet, whose rusty-brown cloak was evidently intended to conceal the ragged state of his nether garments, was lounging in the sunshine and gossiping with an ancient sentinel on duty. He joined us as we entered the gate, and offered his services to show us the fortress.

I have a traveller's dislike to officious ciceroni, and did not altogether like the garb of the applicant.

« You are well acquainted with the place, I presume? »

« Ninguno mas ; pues Señor, soy hijo de la Alham-

bra. »—(Nobody better ; in fact, Sir, I am a son of the Alhambra !)

The common Spaniards have certainly a most poetical way of expressing themselves. « A son of the Alhambra ! » the appellation caught me at once ; the very tattered garb of my new acquaintance assumed a dignity in my eyes. It was emblematic of the fortunes of the place , and befitted the progeny of a ruin.

I put some farther questions to him, and found that his title was legitimate. His family had lived in the fortress from generation to generation ever since the time of the conquest. His name was Mateo Ximenes. « Then perhaps , » said I , « you may be a descendant from the great Cardinal Ximenes ? »—« Dios Sabe ! God knows Señor ! It may be so. We are the oldest family in the Alhambra , — *Christianos Viejos* , old Christians , without any taint of Moor or Jew. I know we belong to some great family or other , but I forget whom. My father knows all about it : he has the coat-of-arms hanging up in his cottage , up in the fortress. » — There is not any Spaniard , however poor , but has some claim to high pedigree. The first title of this ragged worthy , however , had completely captivated me , so I gladly accepted the services of the « son of the Alhambra. »

We now found ourselves in a deep narrow ravine , filled with beautiful groves , with a steep avenue , and various footpaths winding through it , bordered with stone seats , and ornamented with fountains. To our left , we beheld the towers of the Alhambra beetling above us ; to our right , on the opposite side of the ravine , we were equally dominated by rival towers on a rocky eminence. These , we were told , were the Torres Vermejos , or vermillion towers , so called from their ruddy hue. No one knows their origin. They are of a date much anterior to the Alhambra : some suppose them to have been built by the Romans ; others , by some wandering colony of Phœnicians. Ascending the steep and shady avenue , we arrived at the foot of a rude square Moorish tower , forming a kind of

barbican, through which passed the main entrance to the fortress. Within the barbican was another group of veteran invalids, one mounting guard at the portal, while the rest, wrapped in their tattered cloaks, slept on the stone benches. This portal is called the Gate of Justice, from the tribunal held within its porch during the Moslem domination, for the immediate trial of petty causes: a custom common to the Oriental nations, and occasionally alluded to in the Sacred Scriptures.

The great vestibule, or porch of the gate, is formed by an immense Arabian arch, of the horseshoe form, which springs to half the height of the tower. On the key-stone of this arch is engraven a gigantic hand. Within the vestibule, on the keystone of the portal, is sculptured, in like manner, a gigantic key. Those who pretend to some knowledge of Mahometan symbols, affirm that the hand is the emblem of doctrine, and the key of faith; the latter, they add, was emblazoned on the standard of the Moslems when they subdued Andalusia, in opposition to the Christian emblem of the Cross. A different explanation, however, was given by the legitimate son of the Alhambra, and one more in unison with the notions of the common people, who attach something of mystery and magic to every thing Moorish, and have all kinds of superstitions connected with this old Moslem fortress.

According to Mateo, it was a tradition handed down from the oldest inhabitants, and which he had from his father and grandfather, that the hand and key were magical devices on which the fate of the Alhambra depended. The Moorish king who built it was a great magician, or, as some believed, had sold himself to the devil, and had laid the whole fortress under a magic spell. By this means it had remained standing for several hundred years, in defiance of storms and earthquakes, while almost all other buildings of the Moors had fallen to ruin and disappeared. This spell, the tradition went on to say, would last until the hand on

the outer arch should reach down and grasp the key, when the whole pile would tumble to pieces, and all the treasures buried beneath it by the Moors would be revealed.

Notwithstanding this ominous prediction, we ventured to pass through the spell-bound gateway, feeling some little assurance against magic art in the protection of the Virgin, a statue of whom we observed above the portal.

After passing through the barbican, we ascended a narrow lane, winding between walls, and came on an open esplanade within the fortress, called the Plaza de los Algibes, or Place of the Cisterns, from great reservoirs which undermine it, cut in the living rock by the Moors; for the supply of the fortress. Here, also, is a well of immense depth, furnishing the purest and coldest of water; another monument of the delicate taste of the Moors, who were indefatigable in their exertions to obtain that element in its crystal purity.

In front of this esplanade is the splendid pile commenced by Charles V., intended, it is said, to eclipse the residence of the Moslem kings. With all its grandeur and architectural merit, it appeared to us like an arrogant intrusion, and, passing by it, we entered a simple unostentatious portal, opening into the interior of the Moorish palace.

The transition was almost magical: it seemed as if we were at once transported into other times and another realm, and were treading the scenes of Arabian story. We found ourselves in a great court, paved with white marble, and decorated at each end with light Moorish peristyles: it is called the Court of the Alberca. In the centre was an immense basin or fish-pond, a hundred and thirty feet in length by thirty in breadth, stocked with gold-fish, and bordered by hedges of roses. At the upper end of this court rose the great Tower of Comares.

From the lower end we passed through a Moorish arch into the renowned Court of Lions. There is no

part of the edifice that gives us a more complete idea of its original beauty and magnificence than this, for none has suffered so little from the ravages of time. In the centre stands the fountain famous in song and story. The alabaster basins still shed their diamond drops; and the twelve lions, which support them, cast forth their crystal streams as in the days of Boabdil. The court is laid out in flower-beds, and surrounded by light Arabian arcades of open filagree-work, supported by slender pillars of white marble. The architecture, like that of all the other parts of the palace, is characterized by elegance rather than grandeur; bespeaking a delicate and graceful taste, and a disposition to indolent enjoyment. When one looks upon the fairy tracery of the peristyles, and the apparently fragile fretwork of the walls, it is difficult to believe that so much has survived the wear and tear of centuries, the shocks of earthquakes, the violence of war, and the quiet, though no less baneful, pilferings of the tasteful traveller: it is almost sufficient to excuse the popular tradition; that the whole is protected by a magic charm.

On one side of the court, a portal, richly adorned, opens into a lofty hall, paved with white marble, and called the Hall of the Two Sisters. A cupola, or lantern, admits a tempered light from above, and a free circulation of air. The lower part of the walls is encrusted with beautiful Moorish tiles, on some of which are emblazoned the escutcheons of the Moorish monarchs: the upper part is faced with the fine stucco-work invented at Damascus, consisting of large plates, cast in moulds, and artfully joined, so as to have the appearance of having been laboriously sculptured by the hand into light relievos and fanciful arabesques, intermingled with texts of the Koran, and poetical inscriptions in Arabian and Cufic characters. These decorations of the walls and cupolas are richly gilded, and the interstices pencilled with lapis-lazuli, and other brilliant and enduring colours. On each side of the hall are recesses for ottomans and couches. Above an inner porch is a balcony,

which communicated with the women's apartment. The latticed 'jalousies' still remain, from whence the dark-eyed beauties of the haram might gaze unseen upon the entertainments of the hall below.

It is impossible to contemplate this once favourite abode of Oriental manners, without feeling the early associations of Arabian romance, and almost expecting to see the white arm of some mysterious princess beckoning from the balcony, or some dark eye sparkling through the lattice. The abode of beauty is here, as if it had been inhabited but yesterday; but where are the Zoraydas and Lindaraxas!

On the opposite side of the Court of Lion, is the Hall of the Abencerrages; so called from the gallant cavaliers of that illustrious line who were here perfidiously massacred. There are some who doubt the whole truth of this story; but our humble attendant Mateo pointed out the very wicket of the portal through which they are said to have been introduced, one by one, and the white marble fountain in the centre of the hall where they were beheaded. He showed us also certain broad ruddy stains in the pavement, traces of their blood, which, according to popular belief, can never be effaced. Finding we listened to him with easy faith, he added, that there was often heard at night, in the Court of Lions, a low, confused, sound, resembling the murmuring of a multitude; with now and then a faint tinkling, like the distant clank of chains. These noises are probably produced by the bubbling currents and tinkling falls of water, conducted under the pavement, through pipes and channels, to supply the fountains; but, according to the legend of the son of the Alhambra, they are made by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages, who nightly haunt the scene of their suffering, and invoke the vengeance of Heaven on their destroyer.

From the Court of Lions we retraced our steps through the Court of the Alberca, or Great Fishpool; crossing which, we proceeded to the Tower of Comares, so

called from the name of the Arabian architect. It is of massive strength and lofty height, domineering over the rest of the edifice, and overhanging the steep hill-side, which descends abruptly to the banks of the Darro. A Moorish archway admitted us into a vast and lofty hall, which occupies the interior of the tower? and was the grand audience-chamber of the Moslem monarchs, thence called the Hall of Ambassadors. It still bears the traces of past magnificence. The walls are richly stuccoed and decorated with arabesques; the vaulted ceiling of cedar-wood, almost lost in obscurity, from its height, still gleams with rich gilding, and the brilliant tints of the Arabian pencil. On three sides of the saloon are deep windows cut through the immense thickness of the walls, the balconies of which look down upon the verdant valley of the Darro, the streets and convents of the Albaycin, and command a prospect of the distant vega.

I might go on to describe minutely the other delightful apartments of this side of the palace; the Tocador, or toilet of the queen, an open belvidere, on the summit of a tower, where the Moorish sultanas enjoyed the pure breezes from the mountain, and the prospect of the surrounding paradise; the secluded little patio, or garden of Lindaraxa, with its alabaster fountain, its thickets of roses and myrtles, of citrons and oranges; the cool halls and grottoes of the baths, where the glare and heat of day are tempered into a soft mysterious light, and a pervading freshness. But I forbear to dwell minutely on those scenes; my object is merely to give the reader a general introduction into an abode, where, if so disposed, he may linger and loiter with me through the remainder of this work, gradually becoming familiar with all its localities.

An abundant supply of water, brought from the mountains by old Moorish aqueducts, circulates throughout the palace, supplying its baths and fishpools, sparkling in jets within its halls, or murmuring in channels along the marble pavements. When it has paid its tribute

to the royal pile, and visited its gardens and pastures, it flows down the long avenue leading to the city, tinkling in rills, gushing in fountains, and maintaining a perpetual verdure in those groves that embower and beautify the whole hill of the Alhambra.

Those only who have sojourned in the ardent climates of the South, can appreciate the delights of an abode, combining the breezy coolness of the mountain, with the freshness and verdure of the valley.

While the city below pants with the noontide heat, and the parched vega trembles to the eye, the delicate airs from the Sierra Nevada play through these lofty halls, bringing with them the sweetness of the surrounding gardens. Every thing invites to that indolent repose, the bliss of southern climes; and while the half-shut eye looks out from shaded balconies upon the glittering landscape, the ear is lulled by the rustling of groves, and the murmur of running streams.

THE TOWER OF COMARES.

The reader has had a sketch of the interior of the Alhambra, and may be desirous of a general idea of its vicinity. The morning is serene and lovely; the sun has not gained sufficient power to destroy the freshness of the night; we will mount to the summit of the Tower of Comares, and take a bird's-eye view of Granada and its environs.

Come then, worthy reader and comrade, follow my steps into this vestibule, ornamented with rich tracery, which opens to the Hall of Ambassadors. We will not enter the hall, however, but turn to the left, to this small door, opening in the wall. Have a care! here are steep winding steps and but scanty light; yet up this narrow, obscure, and winding staircase, the proud monarchs of Granada and their queens have often as-

cended to the battlements of the Tower to watch the approach of Christian armies ; or to gaze on the battles in the vega. At length we are on the terraced roof, and may take breath for a moment, while we cast a general eye over the splendid panorama of city and country ; of rocky mountain, verdant valley, and fertile plain ; of castle, cathedral Moorish towers, and Gothic domes, crumbling ruins, and blooming groves.

Let us approach the battlements, and cast our eyes immediately below. See, on this side we have the whole plan of the Alhambra laid open to us, and can look down into its courts and gardens. At the foot of the tower is the Court of the Alberca, with its great tank or fish-pool, bordered with flowers ; and yonder is the Court of Lions, with its famous fountains, and its light Moorish arcades ; and in the centre of the pile is the little garden of Lindaraxa, buried in the heart of the building, with its roses and citrons, and shrubbery of emerald green.

That belt of battlements, studded with square towers, straggling round the whole brow of the hill, is the outer boundary of the fortress. Some of the towers, you may perceive, are in ruins, and their massive fragments are buried among vines, fig-trees, and aloes.

Let us look on this northern side of the tower. It is a giddy height ; the very foundations of the tower rise above the groves of the steep hillside. And see ! a long fissure in the massive walls, shows that the tower has been rent by some of the earthquakes, which from time to time have thrown Granada into consternation ; and which, sooner or later, must reduce this crumbling pile to a mere mass of ruin. The deep, narrow glen below us, which gradually widens as it opens from the mountains, is the valley of the Darro ; you see the little river winding its way under embowered terraces, and among orchards and flower-gardens. It is a stream famous in old times for yielding gold, and its sands are still sifted occasionally, in search of the precious ore. Some of those white pavilions, which here and there gleam from

among groves and vineyards , were rustic retreats of the Moors , to enjoy the refreshment of their gardens.

The airy palace , with its tall white towers and long arcades , which breasts yon mountain , among pompous groves and hanging gardens , is the Generalife, a summer palace of the Moorish kings , to which they resorted during the sultry months , to enjoy a still more breezy region than that of the Alhambra. The naked summit of the height above it, where you behold some shapeless ruins, is the Silla del Moro , or seat of the Moor ; so called , from having been a retreat of the unfortunate Boabdil , during the time of an insurrection , where he seated himself , and looked down mournfully upon his rebellious city.

A murmuring sound of water now and then rises from the valley. It is from the aqueduct of yon Moorish mill, nearly at the foot of the hill. The avenue of trees beyond is the Alameda , along the bank of the Darro, a favourite resort in evenings , and a rendezvous of lovers in the summer nights , when the guitar may be heard at a late hour from the benches along its walks. At present , there are but a few loitering monks to be seen there, and a group of water - carriers from the fountain of Avellanos.

You start ! 'tis nothing but a hawk that we have frightened from his nest. This old tower is a complete breeding - place for vagrant birds ; the swallow and martlet abound in every chink and cranny , and circle about it the whole day long ; while at night , when all other birds have gone to rest , the moping owl comes out of its lurking-place, and utters its boding cry from the battlements. See how the hawk we have dislodged sweeps away below us , skimming over the tops of the trees , and sailing up to the ruins above the Generalife !

Let us leave this side of the tower, and turn our eyes to the west. Here you behold in the distance , a range of mountains bounding the Vega , the ancient barrier between Moslem Granada and the land of the Christians.

Among their heights you may still discern warrior towns, whose grey walls and battlements seem of a piece with the rocks on which they are built ; while here and there is a solitary Atalaya , or watch-tower , mounted on some lofty point, and looking down, as it were , from the sky, into the valleys on either side. It was down the defiles of these mountains , by the pass of Lope , that the Christian armies descended into the Vega. It was round the base of yon grey and naked mountain , almost insulated from the rest , and stretching its bold rocky promontory into the bosom of the plain , that the invading squadrons would come bursting into view , with flaunting banners ; and the clangour of drums and trumpets. How changed is the scene ! Instead of the glittering line of mailed warriors , we behold the patient train of the toillul muleteer , slowly moving along the skirts of the mountain. Behind that promontory , is the eventful bridge of Pinos , renowned for many a bloody strife between Moors and Christians ; but still more renowned as being the place where Columbus was overtaken and called back by the messenger of Queen Isabella , just as he was departing in despair , to carry his project of discovery to the Court of France.

Behold another place famous in the history of the discoverer. Yon line of walls and towers , gleaming in the morning sun , in the very centre of the Vega , is the city of Santa-Fe , built by the Catholic sovereigns during the siege of Granada , after a conflagration had destroyed their camp. It was to these walls that Columbus was called back by the heroic queen ; and within them the treaty was concluded , that led to the discovery of the western world.

Here , towards the south , the eye revels oh the luxuriant beauties of the Vega ; a blooming wilderness of grove and garden , and teeming orchard , with the Xenil winding through it in silver links , and feeding innumerable rills , conducted through ancient Moorish channels, which maintain the landscape in perpetual verdure. Here are the beloved bowers and gardens and rural retreats ,

for which the Moors fought with such desperate valour. The very farm-houses and hovels which are now inhabited by the boors, retain traces of arabesques and other tasteful decorations, which show them to have been elegant residences in the days of the Moslems.

Beyond the embowered region of the Vega; you behold to the south a line of arid hills, down which a long train of mules is slowly moving. It was from the summit of one of those hills that the unfortunate Boabdil cast back his last look upon Granada, and gave vent to the agony of his soul. It is the spot famous in song and story, « The last sigh of the Moor. »

Now raise your eyes to the snowy summit of yon pile of mountains, shining like a white summer cloud in the blue sky. It is the Sierra Nevada, the pride and delight of Granada; the source of her cooling breezes and perpetual verdure, of her gushing fountains and perennial streams. It is this glorious pile of mountains that gives to Granada that combination of delights so rare in a southern city: the fresh vegetation and the temperate airs of a northern climate, with the vivifying ardour of a tropical sun, and the cloudless azure of a southern sky. It is this aërial treasury of snow, which melting in proportion to the increase of the summer heat, sends down rivulets and streams through every glen and gorge of the Alpuxarras, diffusing emerald verdure and fertility throughout a chain of happy and sequestered valleys.

Those mountains may well be called the glory of Granada. They dominate the whole extent of Andalusia, and may be seen from its most distant parts. The muliteer hails them, as he views their frosty peaks from the sultry level of the plain; and the Spanish mariner on the deck of his bark, far, far off on the bosom of the blue Mediterranean, watches them with a pensive eye, thinks of delightful Granada, and chants, in low voice, some old romance about the Moors.

But enough—the sun is high above the mountains, and is pouring his full fervour upon our heads. Already the terraced roof of the tower is hot beneath our feet:

let us abandon it, and descend and refresh ourselves under the arcades by the Fountain of the Lions.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

MOSLEM DOMINATION IN SPAIN.

One of my favourite resorts is the balcony of the central window of the Hall of Ambassadors, in the lofty tower of Comares. I have just been seated there, enjoying the close of a long brilliant day. The sun, as he sank behind the purple mountains of Alhama, sent a stream of effulgence up the valley of the Darro, that spread a melancholy pomp over the ruddy towers of the Alhambra; while the Vega, covered with a slight sultry vapour that caught the setting ray, seemed spread out in the distance like a golden sea. Not a breath of air disturbed the stillness of the hour; and though the faint sound of music and merriment now and then arose from the gardens of the Darro, it but rendered more impressive the monumental silence of the pile which overshadowed me. It was one of those hours and scenes in which memory asserts an almost magical power; and like the evening sun beaming on these mouldering towers, sends back her retrospective rays to light up the glories of the past.

As I sat watching the effect of the declining daylight upon this Moorish pile, I was led into a consideration of the light, elegant, and voluptuous character, prevalent throughout its internal architecture; and to contrast it with the grand but gloomy solemnity of the gothic edifices, reared by the Spanish conquerors. The very ar-

ehitecture thus bespeaks the opposite and irreconcilable natures of the two warlike people who so long battled here for the mastery of the Peninsula. By degrees, I fell into a course of musing upon the singular fortunes of the Arabian or Moresco-Spaniards, whose whole existence is as a tale that is told, and certainly forms one of the most anomalous, yet splendid episodes in history. Potent and durable as was their dominion, we scarcely know to call them. They are a nation, as it were, without a legitimate country or a name. A remote wave of the great Arabian inundation, cast upon the shores of Europe, they seemed to have all the impetus of the first rush of the torrent. Their career of conquest, from the rock of Gibraltar to the cliffs of the Pyrenees, was as rapid and brilliant as the Moslem victories of Syria and Egypt. Nay, had they not been checked on the plains of Tours, all France, all Europe, might have been overrun with the same facility as the empires of the East, and the crescent might at this day have glittered on the fanes of Paris and of London.

Repelled within the limits of the Pyrenees, the mixed hordes of Asia and Africa, that formed this great irruption, gave up the Moslem principle of conquest, and sought to establish in Spain a peaceful and permanent dominion. As conquerors, their heroism was only equalled by their moderation; and in both, for a time, they excelled the nations with whom they contended. Severed from their native homes, they loved the land given them as they supposed by Allah, and strove to embellish it with every thing that could administer to the happiness of man. Laying the foundations of their power in a system of wise and equitable laws, diligently cultivating the art and sciences, and promoting agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; they gradually formed an empire unrivalled for its prosperity by any of the Empires of Christendom; and diligently drawing round them the graces and refinements that marked the Arabian empire in the East, at the time of its greatest civilization, they diffused the light of Oriental knowledge through the Wes-

tern regions of benighted Europe.

The cities of Arabian Spain became the resort of Christian artisans, to instruct themselves in the useful arts. The Universities of Toledo, Cordova, Seville, and Granada, were sought by the pale student from other lands, to acquaint himself with the sciences of the Arabs, and the treasured lore of antiquity; the lovers of the gay sciences resorted to Cordova and Granada, to imbibe the poetry and music of the East; and the steel-clad warriors of the North hastened thither to accomplish themselves in the graceful exercises and courteous usages of chivalry.

If the Moslem monuments in Spain, if the mosque of Cordova, the alcazar of Seville, and the Alhambra of Granada, still bear inscriptions fondly boasting of the power and permanence of their dominion; can the boast be derided as arrogant and vain? Generation after generation, century after century, had passed away, and still they maintained possession of the land. A period had elapsed longer than that which has passed since England was subjugated by the Norman Conqueror, and the descendants of Musa and Taric might as little anticipate being driven into exile, across the same straits traversed by their triumphant ancestors, as the descendants of Rollo and William, and their veteran peers, may dream of being driven back to the shores of Normandy.

With all this, however, the Moslem empire in Spain was but a brilliant exotic tree, that took no permanent root in the soil it embellished. Severed from all their neighbours in the West, by impassable barriers of faith and manners, and separated by seas and deserts from their kindred of the East, they were an isolated people. Their whole existence was a prolonged, though gallant and chivalric struggle, for a foothold in a usurped land.

They were the outposts and frontiers of Islamism. The Peninsula was the great battle-ground where the Gothic conquerors of the North and the Moslem conquerors of the East, met and strove for mastery; and the fiery courage of the Arab was at length subdued by the obstinate and persevering valour of the Goth.

Never was the annihilation of a people more complete than that of the Moresco-Spaniards. Where are they?

Ask the shores of Barbary and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once powerful empire disappeared among the barbarians of Africa, and ceased to be a nation. They have not even left a distinct name behind them, though for nearly eight centuries they were a distinct people. The home of their adoption and of their occupation for ages, refuses to acknowledge them, except as invaders and usurpers. A few broken monuments are all that remain to bear witness to their power and dominion; as solitary rocks, left far in the interior, bear testimony to the extent of some vast inundation. Such is the Alhambra. A Moslem pile, in the midst of a Christian land; an Oriental palace amidst the Gothic edifices of the West; an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent, and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

It is time that I give some idea of my domestic arrangements in this singular residence. The Royal Palace of the Alhambra is entrusted to the care of a good old maiden dame, called Doña Antonia Molina; but who, according to Spanish custom, goes by the more neighbourly appellation of Tia Antonia (Aunt Antonia). She maintains the Moorish halls and gardens in order, and shows them to strangers; in consideration of which she is allowed all the perquisites received from visitors, and all the produce of the gardens, excepting, that she is expected to pay an occasional tribute of fruits and flowers to the Governor. Her residence is in a corner of the palace; and her family consists of a nephew and niece, the children of two different brothers. The ne-

phew , Manuel Molina , a young man of sterling worth , and Spanish gravity. He has served in the armies both in Spain and the West Indies ; but is now studying medicine , in hopes of one day or other becoming physician to the fortress , a post worth at least a hundred and forty dollars a-year. As to the niece , she is a plump little black-eyed Andalusian damsel , named Dolores ; but who , from her bright looks and cheerful disposition , merits a merrier name. She is the declared heiress of all her aunt's possessions , consisting of certain ruinous tenements in the fortress , yielding a revenue of about one hundred and fifty dollars. I had not been long in the Alhambra , before I discovered that a quiet courtship was going on between the discreet Manuel and his bright-eyed cousin , and that nothing was wanting to enable them to join their hands and expectations , but that he should receive his doctor's diploma , and purchase a dispensation from the Pope , on account of their consanguinity.

With the good dame Antonia I have made a treaty , according to which , she furnishes me with board and lodging ; while the merry-hearted little Dolores keeps my apartment in order , and officiates as handmaid at meal-times. I have also at my command a tall , stuttering ; yellow-haired lad , named Pépe , who works in the gardens , and would fain have acted as valet ; but , in this , he was forestalled by Mateo Ximenes , « the son of the Alhambra ! » This alert and officious wight has managed , somehow or other , to stick by me ever since I first encountered him at the outer gate of the fortress , and to weave himself into all my plans , until he has fairly appointed and installed himself my valet , cicerone , guide , guard , and historiographic squire ; and I have been obliged to improve the state of his wardrobe , that he may not disgrace his various functions ; so that he has cast his old brown mantle , as a snake does his skin , and now appears about the fortress with a smart Andalusian hat and jacket , to his infinite satisfaction , and the great astonishment of his comrades. The chief fault of honest

Mateo is an over-anxiety to be useful. Conscious of having foisted himself into my employ, and that my simple and quiet habits render his situation a sinecure, he is at his wit's end to devise modes of making himself important to my welfare. I am, in a manner, the victim of his officiousness; I cannot put my foot over the threshold of the palace, to stroll about the fortress, but he is at my elbow, to explain every thing I see; and if I venture to ramble among the surrounding hills, he insists upon attending me as a guard, though I vehemently suspect he would be more apt to trust to the length of his legs than the strength of his arms, in case of attack. After all, however, the poor fellow is at times an amusing companion; he is simple-minded, and of infinite good humour, with the loquacity and gossip of a village barber, and knows all the small-talk of the place and its environs; but what he chiefly values himself on, is his stock of local information, having the most marvellous stories to relate of every tower, and vault, and gateway of the fortress, in all of which he places the most implicit faith.

Most of these he has derived, according to his own account, from his grandfather, a little legendary tailor, who lived to the age of nearly a hundred years, during which he made but two migrations beyond the precincts of the fortress. His shop, for the greater part of a century, was the resort of a knot of venerable gossips, where they would pass half the night talking about old times, and the wonderful events and hidden secrets of the place. The whole living, moving, thinking, and acting, of this historical little tailor, had thus been bounded by the walls of the Alhambra; within them he had been born, within them he lived, breathed, and had his being; within them he died, and was buried. Fortunately for posterity, his traditionary lore died not with him. The authentic Mateo, when an urchin, used to be an attentive listener to the narratives of his grandfather, and of the gossip group assembled round the shop-board; and is thus possessed of a stock of valuable knowledge concerning the Alhambra, not to be found in the books,

and well worthy the attention of every curious traveller.

Such are the personages that contribute to my domestic comforts in the Alhambra ; and I question whether any of the potentates , Moslem or Christian , who have preceded me in the palace , have been waited upon with greater fidelity , or enjoyed a serener sway.

When I rise in the morning , Pépe , the stuttering lad from the gardens , brings me a tribute of freshculled flowers , which are afterwards arranged in vases , by the skilful hand of Dolores , who takes a female pride in the decorations of my chamber. My meals are made wherever caprice dictates ; sometimes in one of the Moorish halls , sometimes under the arcade of the Court of Lions , surrounded by flowers and fountains : and when I walk out , I am conducted by the assiduous Mateo , to the most romantic retreats of the mountains , and delicious haunts of the adjacent valleys , not one of which but is the scene of some wonderful tale.

Though fond of passing the greater part of my day alone , yet I occasionally repair in the evenings to the little domestic circle of Doña Antonia. This is generally held in an old Moorish chamber, that serves for kitchen as well as hall , a rude fire-place having been made in one corner , the smoke from which has discoloured the walls , and almost obliterated the ancient arabesques. A window , with a balcony overhanging the valley of the Darro , lets in the cool evening breeze ; and here I take my frugal supper of fruit and milk , and mingle with the conversation of the family. There is a natural talent or mother wit , as it is called , about the Spaniards , which renders them intellectual and agreeable companions , whatever may be their condition in life , or however imperfect may have been their education ; add to this , they are never vulgar ; nature has endowed them with an inherent dignity of spirit. The good Tia Antonia is a woman of strong and intelligent , though uncultivated mind ; and the bright-eyed Dolores , though she has read but three or four books in the whole course of her life , has an engaging mixture of naïveté and good sense , and

often surprises me by the pungency of her artless sallies. Sometimes the nephew entertains us by reading some old comedy of Calderon or Lope de Vega, to which he is evidently prompted by a desire to improve, as well as amuse his cousin Dolores; though to his great mortification, the little damsel generally falls asleep before the first act is completed. Sometimes Tia Antonia has a little levee of humble friends and dependents, the inhabitants of the adjacent hamlet, or the wives of the invalid soldiers. These look up to her with great deference, as the custodian of the palace; and pay their court to her by bringing the news of the place, or the rumours that may have straggled up from Granada. In listening to these evening gossipings I have picked up many curious facts, illustrative of the manners of the people and the peculiarities of the neighbourhood. These are simple détails of simple pleasures; it is the nature of the place alone that gives them interest and importance. I tread haunted ground, and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams; and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold, for once, a daydream realized; yet I can scarce credit my senses, or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil, and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through these Oriental chambers, and hear the murmur of fountains and the song of the nightingale; as I inhale the odour of the rose, and feel the influence of the balmy climate, I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the paradise of Mahomet, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

THE TRUANT.

Since noting the foregoing pages, we have had a scene of petty tribulation in the Alhambra, which has thrown a cloud over the sunny countenance of Dolores. This little damsel has a female passion for pets of all kinds, and from the superabundant kindness of her disposition, one of the ruined courts of the Alhambra is thronged with her favourites. A stately peacock and his hen seem to hold regal sway here, over pompous turkeys, querulous guineafowls, and a rabble rout of common cocks and hens. The great delight of Dolores, however, has for some time past been centred in a youthful pair of pigeons, who have lately entered into the holy state of wedlock, and who have even supplanted a tortoiseshell cat and kittens in her affections.

As a tenement for them wherein to commence house-keeping, she had fitted up a small chamber adjacent to the kitchen, the window of which looked into one of the quiet Moorish courts. Here they lived, in happy ignorance of any world beyond the court and its sunny roofs. Never had they aspired to soar above the battlements, or to mount to the summit of the towers. Their virtuous union was at length crowned by two spotless and milk-white eggs, to the great joy of their cherishing little mistress. Nothing could be more praiseworthy than the conduct of the young married folks on this interesting occasion. They took turns to sit upon the nest until the eggs were hatched, and while their callow progeny required warmth and shelter; while one thus stayed at home, the other foraged abroad for food, and brought home abundant supplies.

This scene of conjugal felicity has suddenly met with a reverse. Early this morning, as Dolores was feeding

the male pigeon, she took a fancy to give him a peep at the great world. Opening a window, therefore, which looks down upon the valley of the Darro, she launched him at once beyond the walls of the Alhambra. For the first time in his life the astonished bird had to try the full vigour of his wings. He swept down into the valley; and then rising upwards with a surge soared almost to the clouds. Never before had he risen to such a height, or experienced such delight in flying; and, like a young spendthrift just come to his estate, he seemed giddy with excess of liberty, and with the boundless field of action suddenly opened to him. For the whole day he has been circling about in capricious flights, from tower to tower, and tree to tree. Every attempt has been vain to lure him back by scattering grain upon the roofs; he seems to have lost all thought of home, of his tender helpmate and his callow young. To add to the anxiety of Dolores, he has been joined by two *palomas ladrones*, or robber-pigeons, whose instinct it is to entice wandering pigeons to their own dovecotes. The fugitive, like many other thoughtless youths on their first launching upon the world, seems quite fascinated with these knowing, but graceless companions, who have undertaken to show him life, and introduce him to society. He has been soaring with them over all the roofs and steeples of Granada. A thunder-storm has passed over the city, but he has not sought his home; night has closed in, and still he comes not. To deepen the pathos of the affair, the female pigeon, after remaining several hours on the nest, without being relieved, at length went forth to seek her recreant mate; but stayed away so long, that the young ones perished for want of the warmth and shelter of the parent bosom. At a late hour in the evening, word was brought to Dolores, that the truant bird had been seen upon the towers of the Generalife. Now it happens that the *Administrador* of that ancient palace has likewise a dovecote, among the inmates of which are said to be two or three of these inveigling birds, the terror of all neigh-

bouring pigeon-fanciers. Dolores immediately concluded, that the two feathered sharpers who had been seen with her fugitive, were these bloods of the Generalife. A council of war was forthwith held in the chamber of Tia Antonia. The Generalife is a distinct jurisdiction from the Alhambra, and of course some punctilio, if not jealousy, exists between their custodians. It was determined, therefore, to send Pépe, the stuttering lad of the gardens, as ambassador to the Administrador, requesting, that if such fugitive should be found in his dominions, he might be given up as a subject of the Alhambra. Pépe departed accordingly, on his diplomatic expedition, through the moonlight groves and avenues, but returned in an hour with the afflicting intelligence, that no such bird was to be found in the dovecote of the Generalife. The Administrador, however, pledged his sovereign word that if such vagrant should appear there, even at midnight, he should instantly be arrested, and sent back prisoner to his little black-eyed mistress.

Thus stands the melancholy affair, which has occasioned much distress throughout the palace, and has sent the inconsolable Dolores to a sleepless pillow.

« Sorrow endureth for a night, » says the proverb, « but joy cometh in the morning. » The first object that met my eyes, on leaving my room this morning, was Dolores, with the truant pigeon in her hands, and her eyes sparkling with joy. He had appeared at an early hour on the battlement, hovering shyly about from roof to roof, but at length entered the window, and surrendered himself prisoner. He gained little credit, however, by his return; for the ravenous manner in which he devoured the food set before him, showed that, like the prodigal son, he had been driven home by sheer famine. Dolores upbraided him for his faithless conduct, calling him all manner of vagrant names (though, woman-like, she fondled him at the same time to her bosom, and covered him with kisses). I observed, however, that she had taken care to clip his wings, to prevent all future soarings; a precaution, which I mention,

for the benefit of all those who have truant lovers or wandering husbands. More than one valuable moral might be drawn from the story of Dolores and her pigeon.

THE AUTHOR'S CHAMBER.

On taking up my abode in the Alhambra, one end of a suite of empty chambers of modern architecture, intended for the residence of the Governor, was fitted up for my reception. It was in front of the palace, looking forth upon the esplanade; the further end communicated with a cluster of little chambers, partly modern, inhabited by Tia Antonia and her family; these terminated in a large room, which serves the good old dame for parlour, kitchen, and hall of audience. It had boasted of some splendour in the time of the Moors, but a fire-place had been built in one corner, the smoke from which had discoloured the walls, nearly obliterated the ornaments, and spread a sombre tint on the whole. From these gloomy apartments, a narrow blind corridor and a dark winding staircase, let down an angle of the tower of Comares, groping along which, and opening a small door at the bottom, you were suddenly dazzled by emerging into the brilliant antechamber of the Hall of Ambassadors, with the fountain of the court of the Alberca sparkling before you.

I was dissatisfied with being lodged in a modern and frontier apartment of the palace, and longed to ensconce myself in the very heart of the building. As I was rambling one day about the Moorish halls, I found, in a remote gallery, a door which I had not before noticed, communicating apparently with an extensive apartment, locked up from the public. Here then was a mystery;

here was the haunted wing of the castle. I procured the key, however, without difficulty; the door opened to a range of vacant chambers of European architecture, though built over a Moorish arcade, along the little garden of Lindaraxa. There were two lofty rooms, the ceilings of which were of deep pannel-work of cedar, richly and skilfully carved with fruits and flowers, intermingled with grotesque masks or faces, but broken in many places. The walls had evidently, in ancient times, been hung with damask, but were now naked, and scrawled over with the insignificant names of aspiring travellers; the windows, which were dismantled and open to wind and weather, looked into the garden of Lindaraxa, and the orange and citron trees flung their branches into the chamber. Beyond these rooms were two saloons, less lofty, looking also into the garden. In the compartments of the pannelled ceilings, were baskets of fruit and garlands of flowers, painted by no mean hand, and in tolerable preservation. The walls had also been painted in fresco, in the Italian style, but the paintings were nearly obliterated; the windows were in the same shattered state as in the other chambers. This fanciful suite of rooms terminated in an open gallery with balustrades, which ran at right angles along another side of the garden. The whole apartment had a delicacy and elegance in its decorations, and there was something so choice and sequestered in its situation, along this retired little garden, that it awakened an interest in its history. I found on inquiry, that it was the apartment fitted up by Italian artists in the early part of the last century, at the time when Philip V. and the beautiful Elizabeth of Parma were expected at the Alhambra; and was destined for the Queen and the ladies of her train. One of the loftiest chambers had been her sleeping-room; and a narrow staircase leading from it, though now walled up, opened to the delightful belvidere, originally a mirador of the Moorish Sultans, but fitted up as a boudoir for the fair Elizabeth, and which still retains the name of the Tocador, or toilette, of the Queen. The

sleeping-room I have mentioned, commanded from one window a prospect of the Generalife and its embowered terraces : under another window played the alabaster fountain of the garden of Lindaraxa. That garden carried my thoughts still further back to the period of another reign of beauty ; to the days of the Moorish Sultanas.

« How beauteous is this garden ! » says an Arabic inscription, « where the flowers of the earth vie with the stars of heaven ! What can compare with the vase of yon alabaster fountain, filled with crystal water ? Nothing but the moon in her fullness, shining in the midst of an unclouded sky ! »

Centuries had elapsed, yet how much of this scene of apparently fragile beauty remained ! The garden of Cindaraxa was still adorned with flowers ; the fountain still presented its crystal mirror ; it is true, the alabaster had lost its whiteness, and the basin beneath, overrun with weeds, had become the nestling-place of the lizard ; but there was something in the very decay, that enhanced the interest of the scene, speaking, as it did, of that mutability which is the irrevocable lot of man and all his works. The desolation too of these chambers, once the abode of the proud and elegant Elizabetta, had a more touching charm for me, than if I had beheld them in their pristine splendour, glittering with the pageantry of a court. I determined at once to take up my quarters in this apartment.

My determination excited great surprise in the family, who could not imagine any rational inducement for the choice of so solitary, remote, and forlorn an apartment. The good Tia Antonia considered it highly dangerous ; the neighbourhood, she said, was infested by vagrants ; the caverns of the adjacent hills swarmed with gipsies ; the palace was ruinous, and easy to be entered in many parts ; and the rumour of a stranger quartered alone in one of the ruined apartments, out of the hearing of the rest of the inhabitants, might tempt unwelcome visitors in the night, especially as foreigners are always supposed

to be well stocked with money. Dolores represented the frightful loneliness of the place, nothing but bats and owls flittering about; then there were a fox and a wild cat, that kept about the vaults and roamed about at night.

I was not to be diverted from my humour; so calling in the assistance of a carpenter, and the ever-officious Mateo Ximenes, the doors and windows were soon placed in a state of tolerable security. With all these precautions, I must confess, the first night I passed in these quarters was inexpressibly dreary. I was escorted by the whole family to my chamber, and their taking leave of me, and returning along the waste ante-chambers and echoing galleries, reminded me of those hobgoblin stories, where the hero is left to accomplish the adventure of an enchanted house.

Even the thoughts of the fair Elizabetta, and the beauties of her court, who had once graced these chambers, now, by a perversion of fancy, added to the gloom. Here was the scene of their transient gaiety and loveliness; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment; but what and where were they?—Dust and ashes! tenants of the tomb! phantoms of the memory!

A vague and indescribable awe was creeping over me. I would fain have ascribed it to the thoughts of robbers awakened by the evening's conversation, but I felt that it was something more unreal and absurd. In a word, the long-buried impressions of the nursery were reviving, and asserting their power over my imagination. Every thing began to be affected by the working of my mind. The whispering of the wind among the citron-trees, beneath my window, had something sinister. I cast my eyes into the garden of Lindaraxa; the groves presented a gulf of shadows; the thickets, indistinct and ghastly shapes. I was glad to close the window, but my chamber itself became infected. A bat had found its way in, and flitted about my head and athwart my solitary lamp; the grotesque faces carved in the cedar ceiling seemed to mope and mow at me.

Rousing myself, and half smiling at this temporary weakness, I resolved to brave it, and, taking lamp in hand, sallied forth to make a tour of the ancient palace. Notwithstanding every mental exertion, the task was a severe one. The rays of my lamp extended to but a limited distance around me; I walked as it were in a mere halo of light, and all beyond was thick darkness. The vaulted corridors were as caverns; the vaults of the halls were lost in gloom; what unseen foe might not be lurking before or behind me! my own shadow playing about the walls, and the echoes of my own foot-steps, disturbed me.

In this excited state, as I was traversing the great Hall of Ambassadors there were added real sounds to the conjectural fancies. Low moans, and indistinct ejaculations, seemed to rise as it were beneath my feet; I paused and listened. They then appeared to resound from without the tower. Sometimes they resembled the howlings of an animal, at others they were stifled shrieks, mingled with articulate ravings. The thrilling effect of these sounds, in that still hour and singular place, destroyed all inclination to continue my lonely perambulation. I returned to my chamber with more alacrity than I had sallied forth, and drew my breath more freely when once more within its walls and the door bolted behind me. When I awoke in the morning with the sun shining in at my window and lighting up every part of the building with his cheerful and truth-telling beams, I could scarcely recall the shadows and fancies conjured up by the gloom of the preceding night; or believe that the scenes around me, so naked and apparent, could have been clothed with such imaginary horrors.

Still, the dismal howlings and ejaculations I had heard, were not ideal; but they were soon accounted for, by my handmaid Dolores; being the ravings of a poor maniac, a brother of her aunt, who was subject to violent paroxysms, during which he was confined in a vaulted room beneath the Hall of Ambassadors.

THE ALHAMBRA BY MOONLIGHT.

I have given a picture of my apartment on my first taking possession of it ; a few evenings have produced a thorough change in the scene and in my feelings. The moon , which then was invisible , has gradually gained upon the night , and now rolls in full splendour above the towers , pouring a flood of tempered light into every court and hall. The garden beneath my window is gently lighted up ; the orange and citron-trees are tipped with silver ; the fountain sparkles in the moon-beams , and even the blush of the rose is faintly visible.

I have sat for hours at my window , inhaling the sweetness of the garden , and musing on the chequered fortunes of those whose history is dimly shadowed out in the elegant memorials around. Sometimes I have issued forth at midnight , when every thing was quiet , and have wandered over the whole building. Who can do justice to a moonlight night , in such a climate and in such a place ! The temperature of an Andalusian midnight in summer is perfectly ethereal. We seem lifted up into a purer atmosphere ; there is a serenity of soul , a buoyancy of spirits , an elasticity of frame , that render mere existence enjoyment. The effect of moonlight , too , on the Alhambra , has something like enchantment. Every rent and chasm of time , every mouldering tint and weather-stain disappears ; the marble resumes its original whiteness ; the long colonnades brighten in the moonbeams ; the halls are illuminated with a softened radiance , until the whole edifice reminds of the enchanted palace of an Arabian tale.

At such a time I have ascended to the little pavilion called the Queen's Toilette , to enjoy its varied and extensive prospect. To the right , the snowy summits of the Sierra Nevada would gleam like silver clouds against

the darker firmament , and all the outlines of the mountain would be softened , yet delicately defined. My delight , however , would be to lean over the parapet of the tocador , and gaze down upon Granada , spread out like a map below me ; all buried in deep repose , and its white palaces and convents sleeping , as it were , in the moonshine.

Sometimes I would hear the faint sounds of castañets from some party of dancers lingering in the Alameda ; at other times I have heard the dubious tones of a guitar, and the notes of a single voice rising from some solitary street , and have pictured to myself some youthful cavalier serenading his lady's window ; a gallant custom of former days , but now sadly on the decline , except in the remote towns and villages of Spain. Such were the scenes that have detained me for many an hour loitering about the courts and balconies of the castle , enjoying that mixture of revery and sensation which steal away existence in a southern climate , and it has been almost morning before I have retired to my bed , and been lulled to sleep by the falling waters of the fountain of Lindaraxa.

INHABITANTS OF THE ALHAMBRA.

I have often observed , that the more proudly a mansion has been tenanted in the day of its prosperity , the humbler are its inhabitants in the day of its decline ; and that the palace of the king commonly ends in being the nestling-place of the beggar.

The Alhambra is in a rapid state of similar transition. Whenever a tower falls to decay, it is seized upon by some tatterdemalion family, who become joint tenants , with the bats and owls , of its gilded halls ; and hang their rags , those standards of poverty , out of its windows and loop-holes.

I have amused myself with remarking some of the motley characters that have thus usurped the ancient abode of Royalty, and who seem as if placed here to give a farcical termination to the drama of human pride. One of these even bears the mockery of a regal title. It is a little old woman named Maria Antonia Sabonea, but who goes by the appellation of la Reyna Coquina, or the Cockle-queen. She is small enough to be a fairy, and a fairy she may be for aught I can find out, for no one seems to know her origin. Her habitation is in a kind of closet under the outer staircase of the palace, and she sits in the cool stone corridor, plying her needle and singing from morning till night, with a ready joke for every one that passes; for though one of the poorest, she is one of the merriest little women breathing. Her great merit is a gift for story-telling, having, I verily believe, as many stories at her command as the inexhaustible Scheherezade of the thousand and one nights. Some of these I have heard her relate in the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, at which she is occasionally an humble attendant.

That there must be some fairy gift about this mysterious little old woman, would appear from her extraordinary luck, since, notwithstanding her being very little, very ugly, and very poor, she has had, according to her own account, five husbands and a half, reckoning as a half one, a young dragoon who died during courtship. A rival personage to this little fairy queen, is a portly old fellow with a bottle nose, who goes about in a rusty garb with a cocked hat of oil-skin and a red cockade. He is one of the legitimate sons of the Alhambra, and has lived here all his life, filling various offices; such as deputy alguazil, sexton of the parochial church, and marker of a fives' court established at the foot of one of the towers. He is as poor as a rat, but as proud as he is ragged, boasting of his descent from the illustrious house of Aguilar, from which sprang Gonsalvo of Cordova, the grand captain. Nay, he actually bears the name of Alonzo de Aguilar, so renowned in the history of the conquest; though the graceless wags of the fortress have given

him the title of *el padre santo* , or the holy father , the usual appellation of the Pope , which I had thought too sacred in the eyes of true catholics to be thus ludicrously applied. It is a whimsical caprice of fortune to present , in the grotesque person of this tatterdemalion , a namesake and descendant of the proud Alonzo de Aguilar , the mirror of Andalusian chivalry , leading an almost mendicant existence about this once haughty fortress , which his ancestor aided to reduce ; yet , such might have been the lot of the descendants of Agamemnon and Achilles , had they lingered about the ruins of Troy !

Of this motley community , I find the family of my gossipingsquire , Mateo Ximenes , to form , from their numbers at least , a very important part. His boast of being a son of the Alhambra , is not unfounded. His family has inhabited the fortress ever since the time of the conquest , handing down an hereditary poverty from father to son ; not one of them having ever been known to be worth a maravedi. His father , by trade a riband-weaver , and who succeeded the historical tailor as the head of the family , is now near seventy years of age , and lives in a hovel of reeds and plaster , built by his own hands just above the iron gate. The furniture consists of a crazy bed , a table , and two or three chairs ; a wooden chest , containing his clothes and the archives of his family ; that is to say , a few papers concerning old law-suits , which he cannot read ; but the pride of his hovel is a blazon of the arms of the family , brilliantly coloured , and suspended in a frame against the wall ; clearly demonstrating , by its quarterings , the various noble houses with which this poverty-stricken brood claim affinity.

As to Mateo himself , he has done his utmost to perpetuate his line , having a wife and a numerous progeny , who inhabit an almost dismantled hovel in the hamlet. How they manage to subsist , He only who sees into all mysteries can tell ; the subsistence of a Spanish family of the kind , is always a riddle to me ; yet they do subsist , and what is more , appear to enjoy their existence. The life takes her holiday stroll in the Paseo of Granada , with

a child in her arms and half a dozen at her heels ; and the eldest daughter , now verging into womanhood , dresses her hair with flowers , and dances gaily to the castañets.

Here are two classes of people to whom life seems one long holiday , the very rich , and the very poor ; one because they need do nothing , the other because they have nothing to do ; but there are none who understand the art of doing nothing and living upon nothing , better than the poor classes of Spain. Climate does one half , and temperament the rest. Give a Spaniard the shade in summer , and the sun in winter ; a little bread , garlick , oil , and garbances , an old brown cloak and a guitar , and let the world roll on as it pleases. Talk of poverty ! with him it has no disgrace. It sits upon him with a grandiose style , like his ragged cloak. He is an hidalgo , even when in rags.

The « sons of the Alhambra » are an eminent illustration of this practical philosophy. As the Moors imagined that the celestial paradise hung over this favoured spot , so I am inclined at times to fancy , that a gleam of the golden age still lingers about the ragged community. They possess nothing , they do nothing , they care for nothing. Yet , though apparently idle all the week are as observant of all holy-days and saints' days as the most laborious artizan. They attend all fêtes and dancings in Granada and its vicinity , light bonfires on the hills on St. John's eve , and have lately danced away the moonlight nights , on the harvest-home of a small field within the precincts of the fortress , which yielded a few bushels of wheat.

Before concluding these remarks , I must mention one of the amusements of the place which has particularly struck me. I had repeatedly observed a long lean fellow perched on the top of one of the towers , manœuvring two or three fishing-rods , as though he was angling for the stars. I was for some time perplexed by the evolutions of this aerial fisherman , and my perplexity increased on observing others employed in like manner on different parts of the battlements and bastions ; it was not until I consulted Mateo Ximenes , that I solved the mystery.

It seems that the pure and airy situation of this fortress has rendered it , like the castle of Macbeth , a prolific breeding-place for swallows and martlets , who sport about its towers in myriads , with the holiday glee of urchins just let loose from school. To entrap these birds in their giddy circlings , with hooks baited with flies , is one of the favourite amusements of the ragged « sons of the Alhambra , » who , with the good-for-nothing ingenuity of arrant idlers , have thus invented the art of angling in the sky !

THE COURT OF LIONS.

The peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace , is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past , and thus clothing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these « vain shadows , » I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favourable to this phantasmagoria of the mind ; and none are more so than the Court of Lions , and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest , and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendour exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile , and rent its rudest towers ; yet see , not one of those slender columns has been displaced , not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way ! and all the fairy fret-work of these domes , apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost , yet exist after the lapse of centuries , almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist. I write in the midst of these mementos of the past , in the fresh hour of early morning , in the fated Hall of the Abencerrages. The blood-stained fountain , the legendary monument of their massacre , is before me ; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the an-

cient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around ! Every thing here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings , for every thing is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above , through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal I behold the Court of Lions , with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades , and sparkling in its fountains. The lively swallow dives into the Court, and then surging upwards , darts away twittering over the roofs ; the busy bee toils humming among the flower-beds, and painted butterflies hover from plant to plant , and flutter up and sport with each other in the sunny air. It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem , loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

He , however , who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes , let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the Court , and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls. Then nothing can be more serenely melancholy , or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice , whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the Court. Here was performed , in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella , and their triumphant Court , the pompous ceremonial of high mass , on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall , where the altar was erected , and where officiated the Grand Cardinal of Spain , and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land. I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host , that mixture of mitred prelate and shaven monk , and steel-clad knight and silken courtier ; when crosses and crosiers , and religious standards , were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain , and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus , the future discoverer of a world , taking his modest stand in

a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar, and pouring forth thanks for their victory; while the vaults resounded with sacred minstrelsy, and the deep-toned *Te Deum*.

The transient illusion is over — the pageant melts from the fancy — monarch, priest, and warrior, return into oblivion, with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of their triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vault, and the owl hoots from the neighbouring tower of Comares.

On entering the Court of the Lions, a few evenings since, I was startled at beholding a turbaned Moor quietly seated near the fountain. It seemed, for a moment, as if one of the superstitions of the place were realized, and become visible. He proved, however, to be a mere ordinary mortal; a native of Tetuan in Barbary, who had a shop in the *Zacatin* of Granada, where he sold rhubarb, trinkets, and perfumes. As he spoke Spanish fluently, I was enabled to hold conversation with him, and found him shrewd and intelligent. He told me that he came up the hill occasionally in the summer, to pass a part of the day in the Alhambra, which reminded him of the old palaces in Barbary, which were built and adorned in similar style, though with less magnificence.

As we walked about the palace, he pointed out several of the Arabic inscriptions, as possessing much poetic beauty.

« Ah, señor, said he, when the Moors held Granada, they were a gayer people than they are now-a-days! They thought only of love, of music, and poetry. They made stanzas upon every occasion, and set them all to music. He who could make the best verses, and she who had the most tuneful voice, might be sure of favour and preferment. In those days, if any one asked for bread, the reply was, make me a couplet; and the poorest beggar, if he begged in rhyme, would often be rewarded with a piece of gold. »

« And is the popular feeling for poetry, » said I, « tirely lost among you? »

« By no means , señor ; the people of Barbary , even those of the lower classes , still make couplets , and good ones too , as in the olden time ; but talent is not rewarded as it was then : the rich prefer the jingle of their gold to the sound of poetry or music. »

As he was talking , his eye caught one of the inscriptions that foretold perpetuity to the power and glory of the Moslem monarchs , the masters of this pile. He shook his head , and shrugged his shoulders , as he interpreted it. « Such might have been the case , » said he ; « the Moslems might still have been reigning in the Alhambra , had not Boabdil been a traitor , and given up his capital to the Christians. The Spanish monarchs would never have been able to conquer it by open force. »

I endeavoured to vindicate the memory of the unlucky Boabdil from this aspersion , and to show that the dissensions which led to the downfall of the Moorish throne , originated in the cruelty of his tiger-hearted father ; but the Moor would admit of no palliation.

« Muley Hassan , » said he , « might have been cruel ; but he was brave , vigilant , and patriotic. Had he been properly seconded , Granada would still have been ours : but his son Boabdil thwarted his plans , crippled his power , sowed treason in his palace , and dissension in his camp. May the curse of God light upon him for his treachery ! » With these words the Moor left the Alhambra.

The indignation of my turbaned companion agrees with an anecdote related by a friend , who in the course of a tour in Barbary , had an interview with the Pacha of Tetuan. The Moorish governor was particular in his inquiries about the soil , and especially concerning the favoured regions of Andalusia , the delights of Granada , and the remains of its royal palace. The replies awakened all those fond recollections , so deeply cherished by the Moors , of the power and splendour of their ancient empire in Spain. Turning to his Moslem attendants , the Pacha stroked his beard , and broke forth in passionate lamentations , that such a sceptre should have fallen from the

away of true believers. He consoled himself, however, with the persuasion, that the power and prosperity of the Spanish nation were on the decline; that a time would come when the Moors would conquer their rightful domains; and that the day was perhaps not far distant, when Mahommedan worship would again be offered up in the Mosque of Cordova, and a Mahommedan prince sit on his throne in the Alhambra.

Such is the general aspiration and belief among the Moors of Barbary; who consider Spain, and especially Andalusia, their rightful heritage, of which they have been despoiled by treachery and violence. These ideas are fostered and perpetuated by the descendants of the exiled Moors of Granada, scattered among the cities of Barbary. Several of these reside in Tetuan, preserving their ancient names, such as Paez and Medina, and refraining from intermarriage with any families who cannot claim the same high origin. Their vaunted lineage is regarded with a degree of popular deference, rarely shown in Mahommedan communities to any hereditary distinction, except in the royal line.

These families, it is said, continue to sigh after the terrestrial paradise of their ancestors, and to put up prayers in their mosques on Fridays, imploring Allah to hasten the time when Granada shall be restored to the faithful: an event to which they look forward as fondly and confidently as did the Christian crusaders to the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. Nay, it is added, that some of them retain the ancient maps and deeds of the estates and gardens of their ancestors at Granada, and even the keys of the houses; holding them as evidences of their hereditary claims, to be produced at the anticipated day of restoration.

The Court of the Lions has also its share of supernatural legends. I have already mentioned the belief in the murmuring of voices and clanking of chains, made at night by the spirits of the murdered Abencerrages. Mateo Ximenes, a few evenings since, at one of the gatherings in Dame Antonia's apartment, related a fact which hap-

pened within the knowledge of his grandfather, the legendary tailor.

There was an invalid soldier, who had charge of the Alhambra to show it to strangers. As he was one evening, about twilight, passing through the Court of Lions, he heard footsteps in the hall of the Abencerrages. Supposing some visitors to be lingering there, he advanced to attend upon them, when to his astonishment he beheld four Moors richly dressed, with gilded cuirasses and scimetars, and poniards glittering with precious stones. They were walking to and fro, with solemn pace; but paused and beckoned to him. The old soldier, however, took to flight, and could never afterwards be prevailed upon to enter the Alhambra. Thus it is that men sometimes turn their backs upon fortune; for it is the firm opinion of Mateo, that the Moors intended to reveal the place where their treasures lay buried. A successor to the invalid soldier was more knowing; he came to the Alhambra poor, but at the end of a year went off to Malaga, bought houses, set up a carriage, and still lives there one of the richest as well as oldest men of the place; all which, Mateo sagely surmises, was in consequence of his finding out the golden secret of these phantom Moors.

BOABDIL EL CHICO.

My conversation with the man in the Court of Lions, set me to musing on the singular fate of Boabdil. Never was surname more applicable than that bestowed upon him by subjects, of « el Zogoybi, » or « the unlucky. » His misfortunes began almost in his cradle. In his tender youth, he was imprisoned and menaced with death by an inhuman father, and only escaped through a mother's stratagem; in after years his life was embittered and repeatedly endangered, by the hostilities of a usur-

ping uncle ; his reign was distracted by external invasions and internal feuds : he was alternately the foe, the friend, and always the dupe of Ferdinand , until conquered and dethroned by the miugled craft and force of that perfidious monarch. An exile from his native land , he took refuge with one of the princes of Africa , and fell obscurely in battle , fighting in the cause of a stranger. His misfortunes ceased not with his death. If Boabdil cherished a desire to leave an honourable name on the historic page, how cruelly has he been defrauded of his hopes ! Who is there that has turned the least attention to the romantic history of the Moorish domination in Spain , without kindling with indignation at the alleged atrocities of Boabdil ? Who has not been touched with the woes of his lovely and gentle queen , subjected by him to a trial of life and death , on a false charge of infidelity ? Who has not been shocked by his alleged murder of his sister and her two children , in a transport of passion ? Who has not felt his blood boil , at the inhuman massacre of the gallant Abencerrages , thirty-six of whom , it is affirmed , he ordered to be beheaded in the Court of Lions ? All these charges have been reiterated in various forms ; they have passed into ballads , dramas , and romances , until they have taken too thorough possession of the public mind to be eradicated. There is not a foreigner of education that visits the Alhambra , but asks for the fountain where the Abencerrages were beheaded ; and gazes with horror at the grated gallery where the Queen is said to have been confined ; not a peasant of the Vega or the Sierra , but sings the story in rude couplets , to the accompaniment of his guitar , while his hearers learn to execrate the very name of Boabdil.

Never , however , was name more foully and unjustly slandered. I have examined all the authentic chronicles and letters written by Spanish authors , contemporary with Boabdil ; some of whom were in the confidence of the catholic sovereigns . and actually present in the camp throughout the war. I have examined all the Arabian

authorities I could get access to, through the medium of translation, and can find nothing to justify these dark and hateful accusations. The whole of these tales may be traced to a work commonly called « The Civil Wars of Granada, » containing a pretended history of the feuds of the Zegries and Abencerrages, during the last struggle of the Moorish empire. This work appeared originally in Spanish, and professed to be translated from the Arabic by one Gines Perez de Hila, an inhabitant of Murcia. It has since passed into various languages, and Florian has taken from it much of the fable of his Gonsalvo of Cordova; it has since, in a great measure, usurped the authority of real history, and is currently believed by the people, and especially the peasantry of Granada. The whole of it, however, is a mass of fiction, mingled with a few disfigured truths, which give it an air of veracity. It bears internal evidence of its falsity: the manners and customs of the Moors being extravagantly misrepresented in it, and scenes depicted, totally incompatible with their habits and their faith, and which never could have been recorded by a Mahomedan writer.

I confess there seems to me something almost criminal, in the wilful perversions of this work: great latitude is undoubtedly to be allowed to romantic fiction, but there are limits which it must not pass; and the names of the distinguished dead, which belong to history, are no more to be calumniated than those of the illustrious living. One would have thought too, that the unfortunate Boabdil had suffered enough for his justifiable hostility to the Spaniards, by being stripped of his kingdom; without having his name thus wantonly traduced, and rendered a by-word and a theme of infamy in his native land, and in the very mansion of his fathers!

It is not intended hereby to affirm that the transactions imputed to Boabdil, are totally without historic foundation; but as far as they can be traced, they appear to have been the acts of his father, Aben Hassan; who is represented by both Christian and Arabian chroniclers,

as being of a cruel and ferocious nature. It was he who put to death the cavaliers of the illustrious line of the Abencerrages, upon suspicion of their being engaged in a conspiracy to dispossess him of his throne.

The story of the accusation of the Queen of Boabdil, and of her confinement in one of the towers, may also be traced to an incident in the life of his tigerhearted father. Aben Hassan, in his advanced age, married a beautiful Christian captive of noble descent, who took the Moorish appellation of Zorayda, by whom he had two sons. She was of an ambitious spirit, and anxious that her children should succeed to the crown. For this purpose she worked upon the suspicious temper of the King; inflaming him with jealousies of his children by his other wives and concubines, whom she accused of plotting against his throne and life. Some of them were slain by the ferocious father. Ayxa la Horra, the virtuous mother of Boabdil, who had once been his cherished favourite, became likewise the object of his suspicion. He confined her and her son in the tower of Comares, and would have sacrificed Boabdil to his fury, but that this tender mother lowered him from the tower, in the night, by means of the scarfs of herself and her attendants, and thus enabled him to escape to Guadix.

Such is the only shadow of a foundation that I can find for the story of the accused and captive Queen; and in this it appears that Boabdil was the persecuted, instead of the persecutor.

Throughout the whole of his brief, turbulent, and disastrous reign, Boabdil gives evidence of a mild and amiable character. He, in the first instance, won the hearts of the people by his affable and gracious manners; he was always peaceable, and never inflicted any severity of punishment upon those who occasionally rebelled against him. He was personally brave, but he wanted moral courage; and, in times of difficulty and perplexity, was wavering and irresolute. This feebleness of spirit hastened his downfall, while it deprived him of that heroic grace which would have given a grandeur and dignity to

his fate, and rendered him worthy of closing the splendid drama of the Moslem domination in Spain.

MEMENTOS OF BOABDIL.

While my mind was still warm with the subject of the unfortunate Boabdil, I set forth to trace the mementos connected with his story which yet exist in this scene of his sovereignty and his misfortunes. In the picture-gallery of the Palace of the Generalife, hangs his portrait. The face is mild, and somewhat melancholy, with a fair complexion and yellow hair; if it be a true representation of the man, he may have been wavering and uncertain, but there is nothing of cruelty or unkindness in his aspect.

I next visited the dungeon where he was confined in his youthful days; when his cruel father meditated his destruction. It is a vaulted-room in the tower of Comares, under the Hall of Ambassadors; a similar room, separated by a narrow passage, was the prison of his mother, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra. The walls are of prodigious thickness, and the small windows secured by iron bars. A narrow stone gallery, with a low parapet, extends round three sides of the tower, just below the windows, but at a considerable height from the ground. From this gallery, it is presumed, the Queen lowered her son with the scarfs of herself and her female attendants, during the darkness of night, to the hill-side, at the foot of which waited a domestic, with a fleet steed, to bear the prince to the mountains.

As I paced this gallery, my imagination pictured the anxious Queen leaning over the parapet, and listening, with the throbbings of a mother's heart, to the last echoes of the horse's hoof, as her son scoured along the narrow valley of the Darro.

My next search was for the gate by which Boabdil departed from the Alhambra, when about to surrender his capital. With the melancholy caprice of a broken spirit,

he requested of the Catholic monarchs, that no one afterwards might be permitted to pass through this gate. His prayer, according to ancient chronicles, was complied with, through the sympathy of Isabella, and the gate walled up. For some time I inquired in vain for such a portal; at length, my humble attendant, Mateo, learned among the old residents of the fortress, that a ruinous gateway still existed, by which, according to tradition, the Moorish King had left the fortress, but which had never been open within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

He conducted me to the spot. The gateway is in the centre of what was once an immense tower, called *La Torre de los Siete Suelos*, or, the Tower of Seven Floors. It is a place famous in the superstitious stories of the neighbourhood, for being the scene of strange apparitions and Moorish enchantments.

This once-redoubtable tower is now a mere wreck, having been blown up with gunpowder by the French, when they abandoned the fortress. Great masses of the wall lie scattered about, buried in the luxuriant herbage, or overshadowed by vines and fig-trees. The arch of the gateway, though rent by the shock, still remains; but the last wish of poor Boabdil has again, though unintentionally, been fulfilled, for the portal has been closed up by loose stones gathered from the ruins, and remains impassable.

Following up the route of the Molsem monarch, as it remains on record, I crossed on horseback the hill of Los Mátyros, keeping along the garden of the convent of the same name, and thence down a rugged ravine, beset by thickets of aloes and Indian figs, and lined by caves and hovels swarming with gipsies. It was the road taken by Boabdil to avoid passing through the city. The descent was so steep and broken, that I was obliged to dismount and lead my horse.

Emerging from the ravine, and passing by the *Puerta de los Molinos*, (the gate of the mills,) I issued forth upon the public promenade called the Prado, and pur-

suing the course of the Xenil , arrived at a small Moorish mosque , now converted into the chapel or hermitage of San Sebastian. A tablet on the wall relates that on this spot Boabdil surrendered the keys of Granada to the Castilian sovereigns. From thence I rode slowly across the Vega to a village where the family and household of the unhappy King awaited him , for he had sent them forward on the preceding night from the Alhambra , that his mother and wife might not participate in his personal humiliation , or be exposed to the gaze of the conquerors. Following on in the route of the melancholy band of royal exiles , I arrived at the foot of a chain of barren and dreary heights , forming the skirt of the Alpuxarra mountains. From the summit of one of these , the unfortunate Boabdil took his last look at Granada ; it bears a name expressive of his sorrows , *La Cuesta de las Lagrimas* (the hill of tears). Beyond it , a sandy road winds across a rugged cheerless waste , doubly dismal to the unhappy monarch , as it led to exile.

I spurred my horse to the summit of a rock , where Boabdil uttered his last sorrowful exclamation , as he turned his eyes from taking their farewell gaze : it is still denominated *El ultimo Suspiro del Moro* (the last Sigh of the Moor). Who can wonder at his anguish at being expelled from such a kingdom and such an abode ? With the Alhambra he seemed to be yielding up all the honours of his line , and all the glories and delights of life.

It was here , too , that his affliction was imbittered by the reproach of his mother , Ayxa , who had so often assisted him in times of peril , and had vainly sought to instil into him her own resolute spirit. « You do well , » said she , « to weep as a woman over what you could not defend as a man , » — a speech that savours more of the pride of the princess than the tenderness of the mother.

When this anecdote was related to Charles V. by Bishop Guevara , the emperor joined in the expression of scorn at the weakness of the wavering Boabdil. « Had I been he , or he been I , » said the haughty potentate , « I

would rather have made this Alhambra my sepulchre, than have lived without a kingdom in the Alpuxarra. »

How easy it is for those in power and prosperity to preach heroism to the vanquished ! how little can they understand, that life itself may rise in value with the unfortunate, when nought but life remains !

THE BALCONY.

In the Hall of Ambassadors, at the central window there is a balcony, of which I have already made mention : at projects like a cage from the face of the tower, high in mid-air above the tops of the trees that grow on the steep hill-side. It serves me as a kind of observatory, where I often take my seat to consider not merely the heaven above, but the earth beneath. Besides the magnificent prospect which it commands of mountain, valley, and vega, there is a busy little scene of human life laid upon to inspection immediately below. At the foot of the hill is an alameda, or public walk, which, though not so fashionable as the more modern and splendid paseo of the Xenil, still boasts of a varied and picturesque concourse. Hither resort the small gentry of the suburbs, together with priests and friars, who walk for appetite and digestion, majos and majas, the beaux and belles of the lower classes, in their Andalusian dresses, swaggering contrabandistas, and sometimes half-muffled and mysterious loungers of the higher ranks, on some secret assignation.

It is a moving and motley picture of Spanish life and character, which I delight to study ; and, as the naturalist has his microscope to aid him in his investigations, so I have a small pocket-telescope which brings the countenances of the motley groups so close as almost, at times, to make me think I can divine their conversation by the play and expression of their features. I am thus,

in a manner, an invisible observer, and, without quitting my solitude, can throw myself in an instant into the midst of society, — a rare advantage to one of somewhat shy and quiet habits, and who, like myself, is fond of observing the drama of life, without becoming an actor in the scene.

There is a considerable suburb lying below the Alhambra, filling the narrow gorge of the valley, and extending up the opposite hill of the Albaycia. Many of the houses are built in the Moorish style, round patios, or courts, cooled by fountains, and open to the sky; and as the inhabitants pass much of their time in these courts, and on the terraced roofs during the summer season, it follows that many a glance at their domestic life may be obtained by an aërial spectator like myself, who can look down on them from the clouds.

I enjoy, in some degree, the advantages of the student in the famous old Spanish story, who beheld all Madrid unroofed for his inspection; and my gossiping Squire, Mateo Ximenes, officiates occasionally as my Asmodeus, to give me anecdotes of the different mansions and their inhabitants.

I prefer, however, to form conjectural histories for myself; and thus can sit for hours weaving from casual incidents and indications that pass under my eye, the whole tissue of schemes, intrigues, and occupations of certain of the busy mortals below. There is scarce a pretty face, or a striking figure that I daily see, about which I have not thus gradually framed a dramatic story: though some of my characters will occasionally act in direct opposition to the part assigned them, and disconcert my whole drama. A few days since, as I was reconnoitring with my glass the streets of the Albaycia, I beheld the procession of a Novice about to take the veil; and remarked several circumstances that excited the strongest sympathy in the fate of the youthful being thus about to be consigned to a living tomb. I ascertained to my satisfaction that she was beautiful; and, by the paleness of her cheek, that she was a victim, rather

than a votary. She was arrayed in bridal garments, and decked with a chaplet of white flowers, but her heart evidently revolted at this mockery of a spiritual union, and yearned after its earthly loves. A tall stern-looking man walked near her in the procession; it was evidently the tyrannical father, who, from some bigoted or sordid motive, had compelled this sacrifice. Amidst the crowd was a dark handsome youth, in Andalusian garb, who seemed to fix on her an eye of agony. It was doubtless the secret lover from whom she was for ever to be separated. My indignation rose as I noted the malignant expression painted on the countenances of the attendant monks and friars. The procession arrived at the chapel of the Convent; the sun gleamed for the last time upon the chaplet of the poor Novice, as she crossed the fatal threshold, and disappeared within the building. The throng poured in with cowl, and cross, and minstrelsy; the lover paused for a moment at the door. I could divine the tumult of his feelings; but he mastered them, and entered. There was a long interval—I pictured to myself the scene passing within; the poor Novice despoiled of her transient finery, clothed in the conventual garb, her bridal chaplet taken from her brow, her beautiful head shorn of its long silken tresses—I heard her murmur the irrevocable vow. I saw her extended on her bier; the death pall spread over her; the funeral service was performed; I heard the deep tones of the organ, and the plaintive requiem chaunted by the nuns; the father looked on with a hard unfeeling countenance. The lover—but no, my imagination refused to paint the lover; there the picture remained a blank.

After a time the throng again poured forth, and dispersed various ways, to enjoy the light of the sun and mingle with the stirring scenes of life; the victim, however, remained behind. Almost the last that came forth were the father and the lover; they were in earnest conversation. The latter was vehement in his gesticulations; I expected some violent termination to my drama; but an angle of a building interfered and closed

the scene. My eye has since frequently been turned to that convent with painful interest. I remarked late at night a light burning in a remote window of one of its towers. « There, » said I, « the unhappy nun sits weeping in her cell, while perhaps her lover paces the street below in unavailing anguish.

The officious Mateo interrupted my meditations, and destroyed in an instant the cobweb tissue of my fancy. With his usual zeal he had gathered facts concerning the scene, that put my fictions all to flight. The heroine of my romance was neither young nor handsome; she had no lover—she had entered the convent of her own free will, as a respectable asylum, and was one of the most cheerful residents within its walls.

It was some little while before I could forgive the wrong done me by the nun, in being thus happy in her cell, in contradiction to all the rules of romance; I diverted my spleen, however, by watching, for a day or two, the pretty coquetries of a dark-eyed brunette, who, from the covert of a balcony shrouded with flowering shrubs and a silken awning, was carrying on a mysterious correspondence with a handsome, dark, well-whiskered cavalier, who was frequently in the street beneath her window. Sometimes I saw him at an early hour, stealing forth wrapped to the eyes in a mantle. Sometimes he loitered at a corner, in various disguises, apparently waiting for a private signal to slip into the house. Then there was the tinkling of a guitar at night, and a lantern shifted from place to place in the balcony. I imagined another intrigue like that of *Almaviva*, but was again disconcerted in all my suppositions, by being informed that the supposed lover was the husband of the lady, and a noted *contrabandista*; and that all his mysterious signs and movements had doubtless some smuggling scheme in view.

I occasionally amused myself with noting from this balcony the gradual changes that came over the scenes below according to the different stages of the day.

Scarce has the grey dawn streaked the sky, and the earliest cock crowed from the cottages of the hill-side,

when the suburbs give signs of reviving animation; for the fresh hours of dawning are precious in the summer season in a sultry climate. All are anxious to get the start of the sun, in the business of the day. The muleteer drives forth his loaded train for the journey; the traveller slings his carbine behind his saddle, and mounts his steed at the gate of the hostel; the brown peasant urges his loitering beasts, laden with panniers of sunny fruit and fresh dewy vegetables; for already the thrifty housewives are hastening to the market.

The sun is up and sparkles along the valley, tipping the transparent foliage of the groves. The matin bells resound melodiously through the pure bright air, announcing the hour of devotion. The muleteer halts his burthened animals before the chapel, thrusts his staff through his belt behind, and enters with hat in hand, smoothing his coal-black hair, to hear a mass, and put up a prayer for a prosperous wayfaring across the sierra. And now steals forth on fairy foot the gentle Señora, in trim basquiña, with restless fan in hand, and dark eye flashing from beneath the gracefully folded mantilla: she seeks some well-frequented church to offer up her morning orisons; but the nicely adjusted dress, the dainty shoe, and cobweb stocking, the raven tresses, exquisitely braided, the fresh plucked rose, that gleams among them like a gem, show that earth divides with Heaven the empire of her thoughts. Keep an eye upon her, careful mother, or virgin aunt, or vigilant duenna, whichever you be, that walk behind.

As the morning advances, the din of labour augments on every side; the streets are thronged with man, and steed, and beast of burthen, and there is a hum and murmur, like the surges of the ocean. As the sun ascends to his meridian, the hum and bustle gradually decline; at the height of noon there is a pause. The panting city sinks into lassitude, and for several hours there is a general repose. The windows are closed; the curtains drawn, the inhabitants retired into the coolest recesses of their mansions; the full-fed monk snores in

dormitory ; the brawny porter lies stretched on the pavement beside his burthen ; the peasant and the labourer sleep beneath the trees of the Alameda , lulled by the sultry chirping of the locust. The streets are deserted , except by the water-carrier who refreshes the ear by proclaiming the merits of his sparkling beverage , « colder than the mountain snow. »

As the sun declines, there is again a gradual reviving, and when the vesper bell rings out his sinking knell , all nature seems to rejoice that the tyrant of the day has fallen. Now begins the bustle of enjoyment , when the citizens pour forth to breathe the evening air , and revel away the brief twilight in the walks and gardens of the Darro and the Xenil.

As night closes , the capricious scene assumes new features. Light after light gradually twinkles forth ; here a taper from a balconied window ; there a votive lamp before the image of a Saint. Thus , by degrees , the city emerges from the pervading gloom , and sparkles with scattered lights , like the starry firmament. Now break forth from court and garden , and street and lane, the tinkling of innumerable guitars , and the clicking of castañets ; blending at this lofty height , in a faint but general concert. Enjoy the moment , is the creed of the gay and amorous Andalusian ; and at no time does he practise it more zealously than in the balmy nights of summer , wooing his mistress with the dance, the love ditty , and the passionate serenade.

I was one evening seated in the balcony , enjoying the light breeze that came rustling along the side of the hill, among the tree-tops , when my humble historiographer Mateo , who was at my elbow , pointed out a spacious house , in an obscure street of the Albaycia , about which he related , as nearly as I can recollect ; the following anecdote.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MASON.

« There was once upon a time a poor mason, or brick-layer, in Granada, who kept all the saints' days and Saint Monday into the bargain; and yet, with all his devotion, he grew poorer and poorer, and could scarcely earn bread for his numerous family. One night he was roused from his first sleep by a knocking at his door. He opened it and beheld before him a tall, meagre, cadaverous-looking priest.

« 'Hark ye, honest friend!' said the stranger; 'I have observed that you are a good Christian, and one to be trusted; will you undertake a job this very night?'

« 'With all my heart, Señor Padre, on condition that I am paid accordingly.'

« 'That you shall be; but you must suffer yourself to be blindfolded.'

« To this the mason made no objection; so, being hoodwinked? he was led by the priest through various rough lanes and winding passages, until they stopped before the portal of a house. The priest then applied a key, turned a creaking lock, and opened what sounded like a ponderous door. They entered, the door was closed and bolted, and the mason was conducted through an echoing corridor, and a spacious hall, to an interior part of the building. Here the bandage was removed from his eyes, and he found himself in a patio, or court, dimly lighted by a single lamp. In the centre was the dry basin of an old Moorish fountain, under which the priest requested him to form a small vault, bricks and mortar being at hand for the purpose. He accordingly worked all night, but without finishing the job. Just before day-break, the priest put a piece of gold into his hand, and having again blindfolded him, conducted him back to his dwelling.

« 'Are you willing,' said he, 'to return and complete your work?'

« 'Señor Padre, provided I am so well paid.'

« 'Well, then, to-morrow at midnight I will call again.'

« He did so, and the vault was completed.

« 'Now,' said the priest, 'you must help me to bring forth the bodies that are to be buried in this vault.'

« The poor mason's hair rose on his head at these words: he followed the priest, with trembling steps, into a retired chamber of the mansion, expecting to behold some ghastly spectacle of death, but was relieved on perceiving three or four portly jars standing in one corner. They were evidently full of money, and it was with great labour that he and the priest carried them forth and consigned them to their tomb. The vault was then closed, the pavement replaced, and all traces of the work obliterated. The mason was again hoodwinked and led forth by a route different from that by which he had come. After they had wandered for a long time through a perplexed maze of lanes and alleys; they halted. The priest then put two pieces of gold into his hand: 'Wait here,' said he, 'until you hear the cathedral bell toll for matins. If you presume to uncover your eyes before that time, evil will befall you:' so saying, he departed. The mason waited faithfully, amusing himself by weighing the gold pieces in his hand, and clinking them against each other. The moment the cathedral bell rang its matins peal, he uncovered his eyes, and found himself on the banks of the Xenil, from whence he made the best of his way home, and revelled with his family for a whole fortnight on the profits of his two nights' work; after which he was as poor as ever.

« He continued to work a little, and pray a good deal, and keep Saints'-days and holidays, from year to year while his family grew up as gaunt and ragged as a crew of gipsies. As he was seated one evening at the door of his hovel, he was accosted by a rich old curmudgeon, who was noted for owning many houses, and being a griping landlord.

The man of money eyed him for a moment from beneath a pair of anxious shagged eyebrows.

« ‘ I am told, friend, that you are very poor. ’

« ‘ There is no denying the fact, Señor—it speaks for itself. ’

« ‘ I presume then, that you will be glad of a job, and will work cheap. ’

« ‘ As cheap, my master, as any mason in Granada. ’

« ‘ That’s what I want. I have an old house fallen into decay, that costs me more money than it is worth to keep it in repair, for nobody will live in it; so I must contrive to patch it up and keep it together at as small expense as possible. ’

« The mason was accordingly conducted to a large deserted house that seemed going to ruin. Passing through several empty halls and chambers, he entered an inner court, where his eye was caught by an old Moorish fountain. He paused for a moment, for a dreaming recollection of the place came over him.

« ‘ Pray, ’ said he, ‘ who occupied this house formerly? ’

« ‘ A pest upon him! ’ cried the landlord, it was an old miserly priest, who cared for nobody but himself. He was said to be immensely rich, and, having no relations, it was thought he would leave all his treasures to the Church. He died suddenly, and the priests and friars thronged to take possession of his wealth; but nothing could they find but a few ducats in a leathern purse. The worst luck has fallen on me, for, since his death, the old fellow continues to occupy my house without paying rent, and there’s no taking the law of a dead man. The people pretend to hear the clinking gold all night in the chamber where the old priest slept, as if he were counting over his money, and sometimes a groaning and moaning about the court. Whether true or false, these stories have brought a bad name on my house, and not a tenant will remain in it. ’

« ‘ Enough, ’ said the mason sturdily: ‘ let me live

in your house rent-free until some better tenant present, and I will engage to put it in repair, and to quiet the troubled spirit that disturbs it. I am a good Christian and a poor man, and am not to be daunted by the Devil himself, even though he should come in the shape of a big bag of money ! ’

« The offer of the honest mason was gladly accepted ; he moved with his family into the house, and fulfilled all his engagements. By little and little he restored it to its former state ; the clinking of gold was no more heard at night in the chamber of the defunct priest, but began to be heard by day in the pocket of the living mason. In a word, he increased rapidly in wealth, to the admiration of all his neighbours, and became one of the richest men in Granada : he gave large sums to the Church, by way, no doubt, of satisfying his conscience, and never revealed the secret of the vault until on his death-bed, to his son and heir. »

A RAMBLE AMONG THE HILLS.

I frequently amuse myself towards the close of the day ; when the heat has subsided, with taking long rambles about the deep umbrageous valleys, accompanied by my historiographic Squire, Mateo, to whose passion for gossiping I on such occasions give the most unbounded licence ; and there is scarce a rock, or ruin or broken fountain, or lonely glen, about which he has not some marvellous story ; or, above all, some golden legend ; for never was poor devil so munificent in dispensing hidden treasures.

A few evenings since, we took a long stroll of the kind, in the course of which Mateo was more than usually communicative. It was towards sunset that we sallied

forth from the Great Gate of Justice, and ascending an alley of trees, Mateo paused under a clump of fig and pomegranate trees, at the foot of a huge ruined tower, called the Tower of the Seven Floors (*de los Siete Suelos*). Here, pointing to a low archway in the foundation of the tower, he informed me of a monstrous sprite, or hob-goblin, said to infest this tower ever since the time of the Moors, and to guard the treasures of a Moslem King. Sometimes it issues forth in the dead of the night, and scours the avenues of the Alhambra, and the streets of Granada, in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six dogs with terrible yells and howlings.

« But have you ever met with it yourself, Mateo, in any of your rambles? » demanded I.

« No, Señor, God be thanked! but my grandfather, the tailor, knew several persons that had seen it, for it went about much oftener in his time than at present; sometimes in one shape, sometimes in another. Everybody in Granada has heard of the Bellado, for the old women and the nurses frighten the children with it when they cry. Some say it is the spirit of a cruel Moorish King, who killed his six sons and buried them in these vaults, and that they hunt him at nights in revenge. »

I forbear to dwell upon the marvellous details given by the simple-minded Mateo about this redoubtable phantom, which has, in fact, been time out of mind a favourite theme of nursery tales and popular tradition in Granada, and of which honourable mention is made by an ancient and learned historian and topographer of the place. I would only observe that, through this tower was the gateway by which the unfortunate Boabdil issued forth to surrender his capital.

Leaving this eventful pile, we continued our course, skirting the fruitful orchards of the Generalife, in which two or three nightingales were pouring forth a rich strain of melody. Behind these orchards we passed a number of Moorish tanks, with a door cut into the rocky bosom of the hill, but closed up. The tanks, Mateo informed me, were favourite bathing-places of himself and his

comrades in boyhood, until frightened away by a story of a hideous Moor, who used to issue forth from the door in the rock to entrap unwary bathers.

Leaving these haunted tanks behind us, we pursued our ramble up a solitary mule-path wound among the hills, and soon found ourselves amidst wild and melancholy mountains, destitute of trees, and here and there tinted with scanty verdure. Everything within sight was severe and sterile, and it was scarcely possible to realize the idea that but a short distance behind us was the Generalife, with its blooming orchards and terraced gardens, and that we were in the vicinity of delicious Granada, that city of groves and fountains. But such is the nature of Spain—wild and stern the moment it escapes from cultivation; the desert and the garden are ever side by side.

The narrow defile up which we were passing is called, according to Mateo, *el Barranco de la Tinaja*, or, the ravine of the jar, because a jar full of Moorish gold was found here in old times. The brain of poor Mateo is continually running upon these golden legends.

« But what is the meaning of the cross I see yonder upon a heap of stones, in that narrow part of the ravine? »

« Oh, that's nothing—a muleteer was murdered there some years since. »

« So then, Mateo, you have robbers and murderers even at the gates of the Alhambra? »

« Not at present, Señor; that was formerly, when there used to be many loose fellows about the fortress; but they've all been weeded out. Not but that the gipsies who live in caves in the hill-sides, just out of the fortress, are many of them fit for any thing; but we have had no murder about here for a long time past. The man who murdered the muleteer was hanged in the fortress. »

Our path continued up the barranco, with a bold, rugged height to our left, called the « Silla del Moro, » or, chair of the Moor, from the tradition already alluded to, that the unfortunate Boabdil fled thither during a popular insurrection, and remained all day seated on the

rocky summit looking mournfully down on his factious city.

We at length arrived on the highest part of the promontory above Granada, called the Mountains of the Sun. The evening was approaching; the setting sun just gilded the loftiest heights. Here and there a solitary shepherd might be descried driving his flock down the declivities to be folded for the night; or a muleteer and his lagging animals, threading some mountain path, to arrive at the city gates before nightfall.

Presently the deep tones of the cathedral bell came swelling up the defiles, proclaiming the hour of 'oracion' or prayer. The note was responded to from the belfry of every church, and from the sweet bells of the convents among the fountains. The shepherd paused on the fold of the hill, the muleteer in the midst of the road, each took off his hat and remained motionless for a time, murmuring his evening prayer. There is always something pleasingly solemn in this custom, by which, at a melodious signal, every human being throughout the land unites at the same moment in a tribute of thanks to God for the mercies of the day. It spreads a transient sanctity over the land, and the sight of the sun sinking in all his glory, adds not a little to the solemnity of the scene.

In the present instance the effect was heightened by the wild and lonely nature of the place. We were on the naked and broken summit of the haunted Mountain of the Sun, where ruined tanks and cisterns, and the mouldering foundations of extensive buildings, spoke of former populousness, but where all was now silent and desolate.

As we were wandering among these traces of old times, Mateo pointed out to me a circular pit, that seemed to penetrate deep into the bosom of the mountain. It was evidently a deep well, dug by the indefatigable Moors, to obtain their favourite element in its greatest purity. Mateo, however, had a different story, and much more to his humour. This was, according to

tradition, an entrance to the subterranean caverns of the mountain, in which Boabdil and his court lay bound in magic spell; and from whence they sallied forth at night, at allotted times, to revisit their ancient abodes.

The deepening twilight, which, in this climate, is of such short duration, admonished us to leave this haunted ground. As we descended the mountain defiles, there was no longer herdsman or muleteer to be seen, nor any thing to be heard but our own footsteps and the lonely chirping of the cricket. The Shadows of the valleys grew deeper, until all was dark around us. The lofty summit of the Sierra Nevada alone retained a lingering gleam of daylight; its snowy peaks glaring against the dark blue firmament, and seeming close to us, from the extreme purity of the atmosphere.

» How near the Sierra looks this evening! » said Mateo; » « it seems as if you could touch it with your hand; and yet it is many long leagues off. » While he was speaking, a star appeared over the snowy summit of the mountain, the only one yet visible in the heavens, and so pure, so large, so bright and beautiful, as to call forth ejaculations of delight from honest Mateo.

« Que estrella hermosa! que clara y limpia es! — No pueda ser estrella mas brillante! »

(What a beautiful star! how clear and lucid — no star could be more brilliant!)

I have often remarked this sensibility of the common people of Spain to the charms of natural objects. The lustre of a star, the beauty or fragrance of a flower, the crystal purity of a fountain, will inspire them with a kind of poetical delight; and then, what euphonious words their magnificent language affords, with which to give utterance to their transports!

« But what lights are those, Mateo, which I see twinkling along the Sierra Nevada, just below the snowy region, and which might be taken for stars, only that they are ruddy, and against the dark side of the mountain? »

« Those, Señor, are fires, made by the men who gather snow and ice for the supply of Granada. They go up every afternoon with mules and asses, and take turns, some to rest and warm themselves by the fires, while others fill the panniers with ice. They then set off down the mountain, so as to reach the gates of Granada before sunrise. That Sierra Nevada, Señor, is a lump of ice in the middle of Andalusia, to keep it all cool in summer. »

It was now completely dark; we were passing through the barranco, where stood the cross of the murdered muleteer; when I beheld a number of lights moving at a distance, and apparently advancing up the ravine. On nearer approach, they proved to be torches, borne by a train of uncouth figures arrayed in black: it would have been a procession dreary enough at any time, but was peculiarly so in this wild and solitary place,

Mateo drew near, and told me in a low voice, that it was a funeral-train bearing a corpse to the burying-ground among the hills.

As the procession passed by, the lugubrious light of the torches falling on the rugged features and funeral-weeds of the attendants, had the most fantastic effect, but was perfectly ghastly, as it revealed the countenance of the corpse, which, according to the Spanish custom, was borne uncovered on an open bier. I remained for some time gazing after the dreary train, as it wound up the dark defile of the mountain. It put me in mind of the old story of a procession of demons bearing the body of a sinner up the crater of Stromboli.

« Ah! Señor. » cried Mateo, « I could tell you a story of a procession once seen among these mountains, but then you'd laugh at me, and say it was one of the legacies of my grandfather the tailor. »

« By no means, Mateo. There is nothing I relish more than a marvellous tale. »

« Well, Señor, it is about one of those very men we have been talking of, who gather snow on the Sierra Nevada.

« You must know, that a great many years since, in my grandfather's time, there was an old fellow, Tio Nicolo by name, who had filled the panniers of his mule with snow and ice, and was returning down the mountain. Being very drowsy, he mounted upon the mule, and soon falling asleep, went with his head nodding and nodding about from side to side, while his sure-footed old mule stepped along the edge of precipices, and down steep and broken barrancos, just as safe and steady as if it had been on plain ground. At length, Tio Nicolo awoke, and gazed about him, and rubbed his eyes—and, in good truth, he had reason. The moon shone almost as bright as day, and he saw the city below him, as plain as your hand, and shining with its white buildings, like a silver platter in the moonshine; but, Lord! Señor, it was nothing like the city he had left a few hours before! Instead of the cathedral, with its great dome and turrets, and the churches with their spires, and the convents with their pinnacles, all surmounted with the blessed cross, he saw nothing but Moorish mosques, and minarets, and cupolas, all topped off with glittering crescents, such as you see on the Barbary flags. Well, Señor, as you may suppose, Tio Nicolo was mightily puzzled at all this; but while he was gazing down upon the city, a great army came marching up the mountain, winding along the ravines, sometimes in the moonshine, sometimes in the shade. As it drew nigh, he saw that there were horse and foot, all in Moorish armour. Tio Nicolo tried to scramble out of their way, but his old mule stood stock still, and refused to budge, trembling, at the same time, like a leaf—for dumb beasts, Señor, are just as much frightened at such things as human beings. Well, Señor, the hobgoblin army came marching by; there were men that seemed to blow trumpets, and others to beat drums and strike cymbals, yet never a sound did they make; they all moved on without the least noise, just as I have seen painted armies move across the stage in the theatre of Granada, and all looked as pale as death. At last, in the rear of the army, bet-

ween two black Moorish horsemen, rode the Grand Inquisitor of Granada, on a mule as white as snow. Tio Nicolo wondered to see him in such company, for the Inquisitor was famous for his hatred of Moors, and, indeed, of all kinds of Infidels, Jews, and Heretics, and used to hunt them out with fire and scourge. However, Tio Nicolo felt himself safe, now that there was a priest of such sanctity at hand. So making the sign of the cross, he called out for his benediction, when, *hombre!* he received a blow that sent him and his old mule over the edge of a steep bank, down which they rolled, head over heels, to the bottom! Tio Nicolo did not come to his senses until long after sunrise, when he found himself at the bottom of a deep ravine, his mule grazing beside him, and his panniers of snow completely melted. He crawled back to Granada sorely bruised and battered, but was glad to find the city looking as usual, with Christian churches and crosses. When he told the story of his night's adventure, every one laughed at him; some said he had dreamed it all, as he dozed on his mule; others thought it all a fabrication of his own—but what was strange, Señor, and made people afterwards think more seriously of the matter, was, that the Grand Inquisitor died within the year. I have often heard my grandfather, the tailor, say that there was more meant by that hobgoblin army bearing off the resemblance of the priest, than folks dared to surmise.»

« Then you would insinuate, friend Mateo, that there is a kind of Moorish limbo, or purgatory, in the bowels of these mountains, to which the padre Inquisitor was borne off? »

« God forbid, Señor! I know nothing of the matter—I only relate what I heard from my grandfather. »

By the time Mateo had finished the tale which I have more succinctly related, and which was interlarded with many comments, and spun out with minute details, we reached the gate of the Alhambra.

LOCAL TRADITIONS.

The common people of Spain have an Oriental passion for story-telling, and are fond of the marvellous. They will gather round the doors of their cottages in summer evenings, or in the great cavernous chimney corners of the *ventas* in the winter, and listen with insatiable delight to miraculous legends of saints, perilous adventures of travellers, and daring exploits of robbers and *contrabandistas*. The wild and solitary character of the country, the imperfect diffusion of knowledge, the scarceness of general topics of conversation, and the romantic adventurous life that every one leads in a land where travelling is yet in its primitive state, all contribute to cherish this love of oral narration, and to produce a strong infusion of the extravagant and incredible. There is no theme, however, more prevalent and popular than that of treasures buried by the Moors; it pervades the whole country. In traversing the wild *sierras*, the scenes of ancient fray and exploit, you cannot see a Moorish *atalaya*, or watch-tower, perched among the cliffs, or beetling above its rock-built village, but your muleteer, on being closely questioned, will suspend the smoking of his *cigarillo* to tell some tale of Moslem gold buried beneath its foundations; nor is there a ruined *alcazar* in a city but has its golden tradition, handed down from generation to generation among the poor people of the neighbourhood.

These, like most popular fictions; have sprung from some scanty ground-work of fact. During the war between Moor and Christian which distracted this country for centuries, towns and castles were liable frequently and suddenly to change owners; and the inhabitants, during sieges and assaults, were fain to bury their mo-

ney and jewels in the earth, or hide them in vaults and wells, as is often done at the present day in the despotic and belligerent countries of the East. At the time of the expulsion of the Moors also many of them concealed their most precious effects, hoping that their exile would be but temporary, and that they would be enabled to return and retrieve their treasures at some future day. It is certain that from time to time hoards of gold and silver coin have been accidentally dug up, after a lapse of centuries, from among the ruins of Moorish fortresses and habitations; and it requires but a few facts of the kind to give birth to a thousand fictions.

The stories thus originating have generally something of an oriental tinge, and are marked with that mixture of the Arabic and the Gothic which seems to me to characterize every thing in Spain, and especially in its southern provinces. The hidden wealth is always laid under magic spell, and secured by charm and talisman. Sometimes it is guarded by uncouth monsters or fiery dragons, sometimes by enchanted Moors, who sit by it in armour, with drawn swords, but motionless as statues, maintaining a sleepless watch for ages.

The Alhambra, of course, from the peculiar circumstances of its history, is a strong-hold for popular fictions of the kind; and various relics dug up from time to time, have contributed to strengthen them. At one time an earthen vessel was found containing Moorish coins and the skeleton of a cock, which, according to the opinion of certain shrewd inspectors, must have been buried alive. At another time a vessel was dug up containing a great scarabæus or beetle, of baked clay, covered with Arabic inscriptions, which was pronounced a prodigious amulet of occult virtues. In this way the wits of the ragged brood who inhabit the Alhambra, have been set wool-gathering, until there is not a hall, or tower, or vault of the old fortress, that has not been made the scene of some marvellous tradition. Having, I trust, in the preceding papers made

the reader in some degree familiar with the localities of the Alhambra, I shall now launch out more largely into the wonderful legends connected with it, and which I have diligently wrought into shape and form, from various legendary scraps and hints picked up in the course of my perambulations; in the same manner that an antiquary works out a regular historical document from a few scattered letters of an almost defaced inscription.

If any thing in these legends should shock the faith of the over-scrupulous reader, he must remember the nature of the place, and make due allowances. He must not expect here the same laws of probability that govern common-place scene and every-day life; he must remember that he treads the halls of an enchanted palace, and that all is « haunted ground. »

THE HOUSE OF THE WEATHERCOCK.

On the brow of the lofty hill of the Albaycia, the highest part of the city of Granada, stand the remains of what was once a royal palace, founded shortly after the conquest of Spain by the Arabs. It is now converted into a manufactory, and was fallen into such obscurity, that it cost me much trouble to find it, notwithstanding that I had the assistance of the sagacious and all-knowing Mateo Ximenes. This edifice still bears the name by which it has been known for centuries, namely, « La Casa del Gallo de Viento, » *i. e.* The House of the Weathercock. It was so called from a bronze figure of a warrior on horseback, armed with shield and spear, erected on one of its turrets, and turning with every wind; bearing an Arabic motto, which, translated into Spanish, was as follows:

Dice el sabio Aben Habuz :
Que asi se defiende el Andaluz.

In this way , says Aben Habuz the wise ,
The Andalusian his foe defies.

This Aben Habuz , according to Moorish chronicles , was a Captain in the invading army of Taric , and was kept by him as Alcaydé of the Granada. He is supposed to have intented this warlike effigy as a perpetual memorial to the Moslem inhabitants that , surrounded as they were by foes , their safety depended upon being always on their guard , and ready for the field.

Traditions , however , give a different account of this Aben Habuz and his palace , and affirm that his bronze horseman was originally a talisman of great virtue , though , in after ages , it lost its magic properties , and degenerated into a mere weathercock.

The following are the traditions alluded to.

LEGEND

OF

THE ARABIAN ASTROLOGER.

In old times , many hundred years ago , there was a Moorish King named Aben Habuz , who reigned over the kingdom of Granada. He was a retired conqueror , that is to say , one who having in his more youthful days led a life of constant foray and depredation , now that he was grown feeble and superannuated , « languished for repose , » and desired nothing more than

to live at peace with all the world, to husband his laurels, and to enjoy in quiet the possessions he had wrested from his neighbours.

It so happened, however, that this most reasonable and pacific old monarch had young rivals to deal with; princes full of his early passion for fame and fighting, and who were disposed to call him to account for the scores he had run up with their fathers. Certain distant districts of his own territories, also, which during the days of his vigour he had treated with a high hand, were prone, now that he languished for repose, to rise in rebellion and threaten to invest him in his capital. Thus he had foes on every side, and as Granada is girt in by wild and craggy mountains, which hide the approach of an enemy, the unfortunate Aben Habuz was kept in a constant state of vigilance and alarm, not knowing in what quarter hostilities might break out.

It was in vain that he built watch-towers on the mountains, and stationed guards at every pass, with orders to make fires by night and smoke by day, on the approach of an enemy. His alert foes, baffling every precaution, would break out of some unthought-of defile, ravage his lands beneath his very nose, and then make off with prisoners and booty to the mountains. Was ever peaceable and retired conqueror in a more uncomfortable predicament?

While Aben Habuz was harassed by these perplexities and molestations, an ancient Arabian physician arrived at his court. His grey beard descended to his girdle, and he had every mark of extreme age, yet he had travelled almost the whole way from Egypt on foot, with no other aid than a staff, marked with hieroglyphics. His fame had preceded him. His name was Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb, he was said to have lived ever since the days of Mahomet, and to be the son of Abu Ajeeb, the last of the companions of the Prophet. He had, when a child, followed the conquering army of Amru into Egypt, where he had remained many

years studying the dark sciences, and particularly magic, among the Egyptian priests.

It was, moreover, said that he had found out the secret of prolonging life, by means of which, he had arrived to the great age of upwards of two centuries, though, as he did not discover the secret until well stricken in years, he could only perpetuate his grey hairs and wrinkles.

This wonderful old man was honourably entertained by the King; who, like most superannuated monarchs, began to take physicians into great favour. He would have assigned him an apartment in his palace, but the astrologer preferred a cave in the side of the hill which rises above the city of Granada, being the same on which the Alhambra has since been built. He caused the cave to be enlarged so as to form a spacious and lofty hall, with a circular hole at the top, through which, as through a well, he could see the heavens and behold the stars even at mid-day. The walls of this hall were covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics, with cabalistic symbols, and with the figures of the stars in their signs. This hall he furnished with many implements, fabricated under his directions by cunning artificers of Granada, but the occult properties of which were known only to himself.

In a little while the sage Ibrahim became the bosom counsellor of the King, who applied to him for advice in every emergency. Aben Habuz was once inveighing against the injustice of his neighbours, and bewailing the restless vigilance he had to observe, to guard himself against their invasions; when he had finished, the Astrologer remained silent for a moment; and then replied, « Know, O King, that when I was in Egypt I beheld a great marvel devised by a pagan priestess of old. On a mountain, above the city of Borsa, and overlooking the great valley of the Nile, was a figure of a ram, and above it a figure of a cock, both of molten brass, and turning upon a pivot. Whenever the country was threatened with invasion, the ram

would turn in the direction of the enemy, and the cock would crow; upon this the inhabitants of the city knew of the danger, and of the quarter from which it was approaching, and could take timely means to guard against it. »

« God is great ! » exclaimed the pacific Aben Habuz ; « what a treasure would be such a ram to keep an eye upon these mountains around me, and then such a cock, to crow in time of danger ! Allah Akbar ! how securely I might sleep in my palace with such sentinels on the top ! »

The astrologer waited until the ecstasies of the King had subsided, and then proceeded.

« After the victorious Amru (may he rest in peace) had finished his conquest of Egypt, I remained among the ancient priests of the land, studying the rites and ceremonies of their idolatrous faith, and seeking to make myself master of the hidden knowledge for which they are renowned. I was one day seated on the banks of the Nile, conversing with an ancient priest, when he pointed to the mighty pyramids which rose like mountains out of the neighbouring desert. ‘ All that we can teach thee,’ said he, ‘ is nothing to the knowledge locked up in those mighty piles. In the centre of the central pyramid is a sepulchral chamber, in which is enclosed the mummy of the high-priest, who aided in rearing that stupendous pile; and with him is buried a wondrous book of knowledge containing all the secrets of magic and art. This book was given to Adam after his fall, and handed down from generation to generation to King Solomon the wise, and by its aid he built the temple of Jerusalem. How it came into the possession of the builder of the pyramids, is known to him alone who knows all things.’

« When I heard these words of the Egyptian priest, my heart burned to get possession of that book. I could command the services of many of the soldiers of our conquering army, and of a number of the native Egyptians : with these I set to work, and pierced the

solid mass of the pyramid, until, after great toil, I came upon one of its interior and hidden passages. Following this up, and threading a fearful labyrinth, I penetrated into the very heart of the pyramid, even to the sepulchral chamber, where the mummy of the high priest had lain for ages. I broke through the outer cases of the mummy, unfolded its many wrappers and bandages, and, at length, found the precious volume on its bosom. I seized it with a trembling hand, and groped my way out of the pyramid, leaving the mummy in its dark and silent sepulchre, there to await the final day of resurrection and judgment. »

« Son of Abu Ajeeb, » exclaimed Aben Habuz, « thou hast been a great traveller, and seen marvellous things; but of what avail to me is the secret of the pyramid, and the volume of knowledge of the wise Solomon? »

« This it is, O King! by the study of that book I am instructed in all magic arts, and can command the assistance of genii to accomplish my plans. The mystery of the Talisman of Borsa is therefore familiar to me, and such a talisman can I make; nay, one of greater virtues. »

« O wise son of Abu Ajeeb, » cried Aben Habuz, « better were such a talisman, than all the watchtowers on the hills, and sentinels upon the borders. Give me such a safeguard, and the riches of my treasury are at thy command: »

The astrologer immediately set to work to gratify the wishes of the monarch. He caused a great tower to be erected upon the top of the royal palace; which stood on the brow of the hill of the Albaycia. The tower was built of stones brought from Egypt, and taken, it is said, from one of the pyramids. In the upper part of the tower was a circular hall, with windows looking toward every point of the compass, and before each window was a table, on which was arranged as on a chess-board, a mimic army of horse and foot, with the effigy of the potentate that ruled in that di-

rection, all carved of wood. To each of these tables there was a small lance, no bigger than a bodkin, on which were engraved certain Chaldaic characters. This hall was kept constantly closed, by a gate of brass, with a great lock of steel, the key of which was in possession of the King.

On the top of the tower was a bronze figure of a Moorish horseman, fixed on a pivot, with a shield on one arm, and his lance elevated perpendicularly. The face of this horseman was towards the city, as if keeping guard over it; but if any foe were at hand, the figure would turn in that direction, and would level the lance as if for action.

When this talisman was finished, Aben Habuz was all impatient to try its virtues; and longed as ardently for an invasion, as he had ever sighed after repose. His desire was soon gratified. Tidings were brought, early one morning, by the sentinel appointed to watch the tower, that the face of the bronze horseman was turned towards the mountains of Elvira, and that his lance pointed directly against the pass of Lope.

« Let the drums and trumpets sound to arms, and all Granada be put on the alert, » said Aben Habuz.

« O King, » said the astrologer, let not your city be disquieted, nor your warriors called to arms; we need no aid of force to deliver you from your enemies. Dismiss your attendants, and let us proceed alone to the secret hall of the tower. »

The ancient Aben Hebuz mounted the staircase of the tower, leaning on the arm of the still more ancient Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajech. They unlocked the brazen door, and entered. The window that looked towards the pass of Lope was open. « In this direction, » said the Astrologer, « lies the danger; approach, O King, and behold the mystery of the table. »

King Aben Habuz approached the seeming chessboard, on which were arranged the small wooden effigies, when to his surprise, he perceived that they were all in motion. The horses pranced and curveted, the warriors

brandished their weapons, and there was a faint sound of drums and trumpets, and the clang of arms, and neighing of steeds; but all no louder, nor more distinct, than the hum of the bee, or the summer-fly, in the drowsy ear of him who lies at noontide in the shade.

« Behold, O King, » said the astrologer, « a proof that thy enemies are even now in the field. They must be advancing through yonder mountains, by the passes of Lope. Would you produce a panic and confusion amongst them, and cause them to retreat without loss of life, strike these effigies with the butt-end of this magic lance; but would you cause bloody feud and carnage among them, strike with the point. »

A livid, streak passed across the countenance of the pacific Aben Habuz; he seized the mimic lance with trembling eagerness, and tottered towards the table, his grey beard wagging with chuckling exultation: « Son of Abu Ajeeb, » exclaimed he, « I think we will have a little blood! »

So saying, he thrust the magic lance into some of the pigmy effigies, and belaboured others with the butt-end; upon which the former fell as dead upon the board and he rest turning upon each other, began, pell-mell, a chance-medley fight.

It was with difficulty the astrologer could stay the hand of the most pacific of monarchs, and prevent him from absolutely exterminating his foes; at length he prevailed upon him to leave the tower, and to send out scouts to the mountains by the pass of Lope.

They returned with the intelligence, that a Christian army had advanced through the heart of the Sierra, almost within sight of Granada, where a dissension had broken out among them; they had turned their weapons against each other, and after much slaughter had retreated over the border.

Aben Habuz was transported with joy on thus proving the efficacy of the talisman. « At length, » said he, « I shall lead a life of tranquillity, and have all my ene-

mies in my power. O wise son of Abu Ajeeb, what can I bestow on thee in reward for such a blessing? »

« The wants of an old man and a philosopher, O King, are few and simple; grant me but the means of fitting up my cave as a suitable hermitage, and I am content. »

« How noble is the moderation of the truly wise! » exclaimed Aben Habuz, secretly pleased at the cheapness of the recompense. He summoned his treasurer, and bade him dispense whatever sums might be required by Ibrahim to complete and furnish his hermitage.

The astrologer now gave orders to have various chambers hewn out of the solid rock, so as to form ranges of apartments connected with his astrological hall; these he caused to be furnished with luxurious ottomans and divans, and the walls to be hung with the richest silks of Damascus. « I am an old man, » said he, « and can no longer rest my bones on stone couches, and these damp walls require covering. »

He had baths too constructed, and provided with all kinds of perfumes and aromatic oils; « For a bath, » said he, « is necessary to counteract the rigidity of age, and to restore freshness and suppleness to the frame withered by study. »

He caused the apartments to be hung with innumerable silver and crystal lamps, which he filled with a fragrant oil, prepared according to a receipt discovered by him in the tombs of Egypt. This oil was perpetual in its nature, and diffused a soft radiance like the tempered light of day. « The light of the sun, » said he, « is too garish and violent for the eyes of an old man, and the light of the lamp is more congenial to the studies of a philosopher, »

The treasurer of King Aben Habuz groaned at the sums daily demanded to fit up this hermitage, and he carried his complaints to the King. The royal word however, was given; Aben Habuz shrugged his shoulders. « We must have patience, » said he; « this old man has taken his idea of a philosophic retreat from

the interior of the pyramids, and of the vast ruins of Egypt; but all things have an end, and so will the furnishing of his cavern. »

The King was in the right; the hermitage was at length complete, and formed a sumptuous subterranean palace. « I am now content, » said Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb to the treasurer; « I will shut myself up in my cell, and devote my time to study. I desire nothing more, nothing; except a trifling solace, to amuse me at the intervals of mental labour. »

« O wise Ibrahim, ask what thou wilt, I am bound to furnish all that is necessary for thy solitude. »

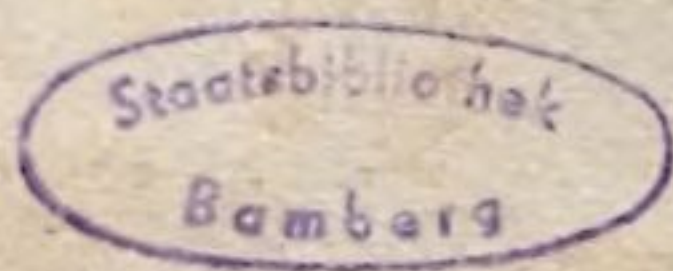
« I would fain have, then, a few dancing women, » said the philosopher.

« Dancing women! » echoed the treasurer with surprise.

« Dancing women, » replied the sage gravely; « a few will suffice, for I am an old man, and a philosopher, of simple habits, and easily satisfied. Let them, however, be young, and fair to look upon, for the sight of youth and beauty is refreshing to old age. »

While the philosopher, Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb, passed his time thus sagely in his hermitage, the pacific Aben Habuz carried on furious campaigns in effigy in his tower. It was a glorious thing for an old man, like himself, of quiet habits, to have war made easy, and to be enabled to amuse himself in his chamber by brushing away whole armies like so many swarms of flies.

For a time he rioted in the indulgence of his humours, and even taunted and insulted his neighbours, to induce them to make incursions; but by degrees they grew wary from repeated disasters, until no one ventured to invade his territories. For many months the bronze horseman remained on the peace establishment with his lance elevated in the air, and the worthy old monarch began to repine at the want of his accustomed sport, and to grow peevish at his monotonous tranquillity.



At length, one day, the talismanic horseman veered suddenly round, and lowering his lance, made a dead point towards the mountains of Guadix. Aben Habuz hastened to his tower, but the magic table in that direction remained quiet; not a single warrior was in motion. Perplexed at the circumstance, he sent forth a troop of horse to scour the mountains and reconnoitre. They returned, after three days' absence.

« We have searched every mountain pass, » said they, « but not a helm or spear was stirring. All that we have found in the course of our foray, was a Christian damsel of surpassing beauty, sleeping at noon-tide beside a fountain, whom we have brought away captive. »

« A damsel of surpassing beauty! » exclaimed Aben Habuz, his eyes gleaming with animation; « let her be conducted into my presence. »

The beautiful damsel was accordingly conducted into his presence. She was arrayed with all the luxury of ornament that had prevailed among the Gothic Spaniards at the time of the Arabian conquest. Pearls of dazzling whiteness were entwined with her raven tresses; and jewels sparkled on her forehead, rivalling the lustre of her eyes. Around her neck was a golden chain, to which was suspended a silver lyre, which hung by her side.

The flashes of her dark refulgent eye were like sparks of fire on the withered, yet combustible, heart of Aben Habuz; the swimming voluptuousness of her gait, made his senses reel. « Fairest of women, » cried he, with rapture, « who and what art thou? »

« The daughter of one of the Gothic princes, who but lately ruled over this land. The armies of my father have been destroyed as if by magic, among these mountains; he has been driven into exile, and his daughter is a captive. »

« Beware, O King! » whispered Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb, « this may be one of those Northern sorceres-

ses of whom we have heard, who assume the most seductive forms to beguile the unwary, Methinks I read witchcraft in her eye, and sorcery in every movement. Doubtless this is the enemy pointed out by the talisman. »

« Son of Abu Ajeeb, » replied the King, » thou art a wise man, I grant, a conjuror for aught I know; but thou art little versed in the ways of woman. In that knowledge will I yield to no man; no, not to the wise Solomon himself, notwithstanding the number of his wives and concubines. As to this damsel, I see no harm in her, she is fair to look upon, and finds favour in my eyes. »

« Hearken, O King, » replied the astrologer. « I have given thee many victories by means of my talisman, but have never shared any of the spoil. Give me then this stray captive, to solace me in my solitude with her silver lyre. If she be indeed a sorceress, I have counter spells that set her charms at defiance. »

« What! more women! » cried Aben Habuz. « Hast thou not already dancing women enough to solace thee? »

« Dancing women have I, it is true, but no singing women. I would fain have a little minstrelsy, to refresh my mind when weary with the toils of study. »

« A truce with thy hermit cravings, » said the King, impatiently. « This damsel have I marked for my own. I see much comfort in her; even such comfort as David, the father of Solomon the wise, found in the society of Abishag the Shunamite. »

Further solicitations and remonstrances of the astrologer only provoked a more peremptory reply from the monarch, and they parted in high displeasure. The sage shut himself up in his hermitage to brood over his disappointment; ere he departed, however, he gave the King one more warning to beware of his dangerous captive. But where is the old man in love that will listen to counsel? Aben Habuz resigned himself to the full sway of his passion. His only study was how to render

himself amiable in the eyes of the Gothic beauty. He had not youth to recommend him, it is true, but then he had riches; and when a lover is old, he is generally generous. The Zacatin of Granada was ransacked for the most precious merchandize of the East; silks, jewels, precious gems, exquisite perfumes, all that Asia and Africa yielded of rich and rare, were lavished upon the princess. All kinds of spectacles and festivities were devised for her entertainment; minstrelsy, tournaments, bull-fights: Granada, for a time, was a scene of perpetual pageants. The Gothic princess regarded all this splendour with the air of one accustomed to magnificence. She received every thing as an homage due to her rank, or rather to her beauty, for beauty is more lofty in its exactions even than rank. Nay, she seemed to take a secret pleasure in exciting the monarch to expenses that made his treasury shrink; and then treating his extravagant generosity as a mere matter of course. With all his assiduity and munificence, also, the venerable lover could not flatter himself that he had made any impression on her heart. She never frowned on him. it is true, but then she never smiled. Whenever he began to plead his passion, she struck her silver lyre. There was a mystic charm in the sound. In an instant the monarch began to nod; a drowsiness stole over him, and he gradually sank into a sleep, from which he awoke wonderfully refreshed, but perfectly cooled for the time of his passion. This was very baffling to his suit; but then these slumbers were accompanied by agreeable dreams, that completely enthralled the senses of the drowsy lover; so he continued to dream on, while all Granada scoffed at his infatuation, and groaned at the treasures lavished for a song.

At length a danger burst on the head of Aben Habuz, against which his talisman yielded him no warning. An insurrection broke out in his very capital: his palace was surrounded by an armed rabble, who menaced his life and the life of his Christian paramour. A spark of his ancient warlike spirit was awakened in the breast of

the monarch. At the head of a handful of his guards he sallied forth, put the rebels to flight, and crushed the insurrection in the bud.

When quiet was again restored, he sought the astrologer, who still remained shut up in his hermitage, chewing the bitter cud of resentment.

Aben Habuz approached him with a conciliatory tone. « O wise son of Abu Ajeeb, » said he, « well didst thou predict dangers to me from this captive beauty : tell me, then, thou who art so quick at foreseeing peril, what I should do to avert it. »

« Put from thee the infidel damsel who is the cause. »

« Sooner would I part with my kingdom, » cried Aben Habuz.

« Thou art in danger of losing both, » replied the astrologer.

« Be not harsh and angry, O most profound of philosophers ; consider the double distress of a monarch and a lover, and devise some means of protecting me from the evils by which I am menaced. I care not for grandeur, I care not for power. I languish only for repose ; would that I had some quiet retreat, where I might take refuge from the world, and all its cares, and pomps, and troubles, and devote the remainder of my days to tranquillity and love ! »

The astrologer regarded him for a moment, from under his bushy eyebrows.

« And what wouldst thou give, if I could provide thee such a retreat ? »

« Thou shouldst name thy own reward ; and whatever it might be, if within the scope of my power, as my soul liveth, it should be thine. »

« Thou hast heard, O King, of the garden of Irem, one of the prodigies of Arabia the happy ? »

« I have heard of that garden ; it is recorded in the Koran, even in the chapter entitled ‘ The Dawn of Day.’ I have, moreover, heard marvellous things related of it by pilgrims who had been to Mecca ; but I considered them wild fables, such as travellers are wont to tell who have visited remote countries. »

« Discredit not, O King, the tales of travellers, » rejoined the astrologer gravely, « for they contain precious rarities of knowledge brought from the ends of the earth. As to the Palace and Garden of Irem, what is generally told of them is true; I have seen them with mine own eyes—listen to my adventure; for it has a bearing upon the object of your request.

« In my younger days, when a mere Arab of the desert, I tended my father's camels. In traversing the Desert of Aden, one of them strayed from the rest, and was lost. I searched after it for several days, but in vain, until wearied and faint, I laid myself down one noontide, and slept under a palmtree by the side of a scanty well. When I awoke, I found myself at the gate of a city. I entered, and beheld noble streets, and squares, and market-places; but all were silent and without an inhabitant. I wandered on until I came to a sumptuous palace with a garden, adorned with fountains and fishponds, and groves and flowers, and orchards laden with delicious fruit; but still no one was to be seen. Upon which, appalled at this loneliness, I hastened to depart; and, after issuing forth at the gate of the city, I turned to look upon the place, but it was no longer to be seen, nothing but the silent desert extended before my eyes.

« In the neighbourhood I met with an aged dervise, learned in the traditions and secrets of the land, and related to him what had befallen me. This, said he, is the far-famed garden of Irem, one of the wonders of the desert. It only appears at times to some wanderer like thyself, gladdening him with the sight of towers and garden walls overhung with richly-laden fruit-trees, and then vanishes, leaving nothing but a lonely desert. And this is the story of it. In old times, when this country was inhabited by the Addites, King Sheddad, the son of Ad, the great-grandson of Noah, founded here a splendid city. When it was finished, and he saw its grandeur, his heart was puffed up with pride and arrogance; and he determined to build a royal palace, with

gardens that should rival all that was related in the Koran of the celestial paradise. But the curse of Heaven fell upon him for his presumption. He and his subjects were swept from the earth, and his splendid city, and palace and gardens, were laid under a perpetual spell, that hides them from the human sight; excepting that they are seen at intervals, by way of keeping his sin in perpetual remembrance.

« This story, O King, and the wonders I had seen, ever dwelt in my mind; and in after years, when I had been in Egypt, and was possessed of the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise, I determined to return and revisit the garden of Irem. I did so, and found it revealed to my instructed sight. I took possession of the palace of Sheddad, and passed several days in his mock paradise. The genii who watch over the place, were obedient to my magic power, and revealed to me the spells by which the whole garden had been, as it were, conjured into existence, and by which it was rendered invisible. Such a palace and garden, O King, can I make for thee, even here, on the mountain above thy city. Do I not know all the secret spells? and am I not in possession of the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise? »

« O wise son of Abu Ajeeb! » exclaimed Aben Habuz, trembling with eagerness, « thou art a traveller indeed, and hast seen and learned marvellous things; Contrive me such a paradise, and ask any reward, even to the half of my kingdom. »

« Alas! » replied the other, « thou knowest I am an old man, and a philosopher, and easily satisfied; all the reward I ask is the first beast of burthen, with its load, that shall enter the magic portal of the palace. »

The monarch gladly agreed to so moderate a stipulation, and the astrologer began his work. On the summit of the hill, immediately above his subterranean hermitage he caused a great gateway or barbican to be erected, opening through the centre of a strong tower.

There was an outer vestibule or porch, with a lofty

arch, and within it a portal secured by massive gates. On the key-stone of the portal the astrologer, with his own hand, wrought the figure of a huge key; and on the key-stone of the outer arch of the vestibule, which was loftier than that of the portal, he carved a gigantic hand. These were potent talismans, over which he repeated many sentences in an unknown tongue.

When this gateway was finished, he shut himself up for two days in his astrological hall, engaged in secret incantations; on the third he ascended the hill, and passed the whole day on its summit. At a late hour of the night he came down, and presented himself before Aben Hahnz. « At length, O King, » said he; « my labour is accomplished. On the summit of the hill stands one of the most delectable palaces that ever the head of man devised, or the heart of man desired. It contains sumptuous halls and galleries, delicious gardens, cool fountains, and fragrant baths; in a word, the whole mountain is converted into a paradise. Like the garden of Irem, it is protected by a mighty charm, which hides it from the view and search of mortals, excepting such as possess the secret of its talismans. »

« Enough! » cried Aben Habuz, joyfully, « to-morrow morning with the first light we will ascend and take possession. » The happy monarch slept but little that night. Scarcely had the rays of the sun begun to play about the snowy summit of the Sierra Nevada, when he mounted his steed, and, accompanied only by a few chosen attendants, ascended a steep and narrow road leading up the hill. Beside him, on a white palfrey, rode the Gothic princess, her whole dress sparkling with jewels, while round her neck was suspended her silver lyre. The astrologer walked on the other side of the King, assisting his steps with his hieroglyphic staff; for he never mounted steed of any kind.

Aben Habuz looked to see the towers of the palace brightening above him, and the embowered terraces of its gardens stretching along the heights; but as yet nothing of the kind was to be descried. « That is the

mystery and safeguard of the place, » said the astrologer; « nothing can be discerned until you have passed the spell-bound gateway, and been put in possession of the place. »

As they approached the gateway, the astrologer paused, and pointed out to the King the mystic hand and key carved upon the portal and the arch. « These, » said he, « are the talismans which guard the entrance to this paradise. Until yonder hand shall reach down and seize that key, neither mortal power nor magic artifice can prevail against the lord of this mountain. »

While Aben Habuz was gazing with open mouth, and silent wonder, at these mystic talismans, the palfrey of the princess proceeded, and bore her in at the portal, to the very centre of the barbican.

« Behold, » cried the astrologer, » my promised reward; the first animal with its burthen that should enter the magic gateway. »

Aben Habuz smiled at what he considered a pleasantry of the ancient man; but when he found him to be in earnest, his grey beard trembled with indignation.

« Son of Abu Ajeeb, » said he; sternly, « what equivocation is this! Thou knowest the meaning of my promise: the first beast of burthen, with its load, that should enter this portal. Take the strongest mule in my stables, load it with the most precious things of my treasury, and it is thine; but dare not to raise thy thoughts to her who is the delight of my heart. »

« What need I of wealth, » cried the astrologer, scornfully; « have I not the the book of knowledge of Solomon the wise, and through it the command of the secret treasures of the earth? The princess is mine by right; thy royal word is pledged; I claim her as my own. »

The princess looked down haughtily from her palfrey. and a light smile of scorn curled her rosy lip at this dispute between two grey-beards for the possession of youth and beauty. The wrath of the monarch got the better of his discretion. « Base son of the desert, » cried he, « thou may'st be master of many arts; but know me

for thy master, and presume not to juggle with thy King. »

« My master ! » echoed the astrologer, « my King ! The monarch of a mole-hill to claim sway over him who possesses the talismans of Solomon ! Farewell, Aben Habuz ; reign over thy petty kingdom , and revel in thy paradise of fools ; for me , I will laugh at thee in my philosophic retirement. »

So saying , he seized the bridle of the palfrey , smote the earth with his staff , and sank with the Gothic princess through the centre of the barbican. The earth closed over them , and no trace remained of the opening by which they had descended.

Aben Habuz was struck dumb for a time with astonishment. Recovering himself, he ordered a thousand workmen to dig , with pickaxe and spade , into the ground where the astrologer had disappeared. They digged and digged , but in vain ; the flinty bosom of the hill resisted their implements ; or if they did penetrate a little way , the earth filled in again as fast as they threw it out. Aben Habuz sought the mouth of the cavern at the foot of the hill , leading to the subterranean palace of the astrologer ; but it was nowhere to be found. Where once had been an entrance , was now a solid surface of primeval rock. With the disappearance of Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ajeeb , ceased the benefit of his talismans. The bronze horseman remained fixed , with his face turned toward the hill , and his spear pointed to the spot where the astrologer had descended , as if there still lurked the deadliest foe of Aben Habuz ,

From time to time the sound of music , and the tones of a female voice , could be faintly heard from the bosom of the hill ; and a peasant one day brought word to the King , that in the preceding night he had found a fissure in the rock , by which he had crept in , until he looked down into a subterranean hall , in which sat the astrologer , on a magnificent divan , slumbering and nodding to the silver lyre of the princess , which seemed to hold a magic sway over his senses.

Aben Habuz sought the fissure in the rock, but it was again closed. He renewed the attempt to unearth his rival, but all in vain. The spell of the hand and key was too potent to be counteracted by human power. As to the summit of the mountain, the site of the promised palace and garden, it remained a naked waste; either the boasted elysium was hidden from sight by enchantment, or was a mere fable of the astrologer. The world charitably supposed the latter, and some used to call the place « The King's Folly; » while others named it « The Fool's Paradise. »

To add to the chagrin of Aben Habuz, the neighbours whom he had defied and taunted, and cut up at his leisure while master of the talismanic horseman, finding him no longer protected by magic spell, made inroads into his territories from all sides, and the remainder of the life of the most pacific of monarchs, was a tissue of turmoils.

At length Aben Habuz died, and was buried. Ages have since rolled away. The Alhambra has been built on the eventful mountain, and in some measure realizes the fabled delights of the garden of Irem. The spell-bound gateway still exists entire, protected no doubt by the mystic hand and key, and now forms the Gate of Justice, the grand entrance to the fortress. Under that gateway, it is said, the old astrologer remains in his subterranean hall, nodding on his divan, lulled by the silver lyre of the princess.

The old invalid sentinels who mount guard at the gate, hear the strains occasionally in the summer nights; and, yielding to their soporific power, doze quietly at their posts. Nay, so drowsy an influence pervades the place, that even those who watch by day may generally be seen nodding on the stone benches of the barbican, or sleeping under the neighbouring trees; so that in fact it is the drowsiest military post in all Christendom. All this, say the ancient legends, will endure from age to age. The princess will remain captive to the astrologer; and the astrologer, bound up in magic slumber by the princess, until the last day, unless the mystic hand shall

grasp the fated key, and dispel the whole charm of this enchanted mountain.

THE TOWER OF LAS INFANTAS.

In an evening's stroll up a narrow glen, overshadowed by fig-trees, pomegranates, and myrtles, that divides the lands of the fortress from those of the Generalife, I was struck with the romantic appearance of a Moorish tower in the outer wall of the Alhambra, that rose high above the tree-tops, and caught the ruddy rays of the setting sun. A solitary window at a great height commanded a view of the glen; and as I was regarding it, a young female looked out, with her head adorned with flowers. She was evidently superior to the usual class of people that inhabit the old towers of the fortress; and this sudden and picturesque glimpse of her reminded me of the descriptions of captive beauties in fairy tales. These fanciful associations of my mind were increased on being informed by my attendant Mateo, that this was the Tower of the Princesses, (*La Torre de las infantas*); so called, from having been, according to tradition, the residence of the daughters of the Moorish kings. I have since visited the tower. It is not generally shown to strangers, though well worthy attention; for the interior is equal, for beauty of architecture and delicacy of ornament, to any part of the palace. The elegance of the central hall, with its marble fountain, its lofty arches, and richly fretted dome; the arabesques and stuccowork of the small but well-proportioned chamber, though injured by time and neglect, all accord with the story of its being anciently the abode of royal beauty.

The little old fairy queen who lives under the staircase of the Alhambra, and frequents the evening tertulias of Dame Antonia, tells some fanciful traditions about three Moorish princesses, who were once shut up in this tower

by their father , a tyrant king of Granada , and were only permitted to ride out at night about the hills , when no one was permitted to come in their way under pain of death. They still , according to her account , may be seen occasionally when the moon is at the full , riding in lonely places along the mountain side , on palfreys richly caparisoned , and sparkling with jewels , but they vanish on being spoken to.

But before I relate any thing further respecting these princesses , the reader may be anxious to know something about the fair inhabitant of the tower with her head dressed with flowers , who looked out from the lofty window. She proved to be the newly-married spouse of the worthy adjutant of invalids ; who , though well stricken in years , has had the courage to take to his bosom a young and buxom Andalusian damsel. May the good old cavalier be happy in his choice , and find the Tower of the Princesses a more secure residence for female beauty than it seems to have proved in the time of the Moslems , if we may believe the following legend !

—

LEGEND

OF

THE THREE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESSES.

In old times there reigned a Moorish King in Granada , whose name was Mohamed , to which his subjects added the appellation of El Haygari , or « The Left-handed. » Some say he was so called on account of his being really more expert with his sinister than his dexter hand ; others , because he was prone to take every thing by the wrong end , or in other words , to mar wherever he

meddled. Certain it is, either through misfortune or mismanagement, he was continually in trouble : thrice was he driven from his throne, and, on one occasion, barely escaped to Africa with his life, in the disguise of a fisherman. Still he was as brave as he was blundering; and though left-handed; wielded his scimeter to such purpose, that he each time reestablished himself upon his throne by dint of hard fighting. Instead, however, of learning wisdom from adversity, he hardened his neck, and stiffened his left arm in wilfulness. The evils of a public nature which he thus brought upon himself and his kingdom, may be learned by those who will delve into the Arabian annals of Granada; the present legend deals but with his domestic policy.

As this Mohamed was one day riding forth with a train of his courtiers, by the foot of the mountain of Elvira, he met a band of horsemen returning from a foray into the land of the Christians. They were conducting a long string of mules laden with spoil, and many captives of both sexes; among whom the monarch was struck with the appearance of a beautiful damsel, richly attired, who sat weeping on a low palfrey, and heeded not the consoling words of a duenna who rode beside her.

The monarch was struck with her beauty, and, on inquiring of the Captain of the troop, found that she was the daughter of the Alcayde of a frontier fortress, that had been surprised and sacked in the course of the foray. Mohamed claimed her as his royal share of the booty, and had her conveyed to his harem in the Alhambra. There every thing was devised to soothe her melancholy; and the monarch, more and more enamoured, sought to make her his queen. The Spanish maid at first repulsed his addresses—he was an infidel—he was the open foe of her country—what was worse, he was stricken in years!

The monarch, finding his assiduities of no avail, determined to enlist in his favour the duenna, who had been captured with the lady. She was an Andalusian by birth, whose Christian name is forgotten, being men-

tioned in Moorish legends by no other appellation than that of the discreet Kadiga — and discreet in truth she was, as her whole history makes evident. No sooner had the Moorish king held a little private conversation with her, than she saw at once the cogency of his reasoning, and undertook his cause with her young mistress.

« Go to, now! » cried she, « what is there in all this to weep and wail about? Is it not better to be mistress of this beautiful palace, with all its gardens and fountains, than to be shut up within your father's old frontier tower? As to this Mohamed being an infidel, what is that to the purpose? You marry him, not his religion: and if he is waxing a little old, the sooner will you be a widow, and mistress of yourself; at any rate, you are in his power, and must either be a queen or a slave. When in the hands of a robber, it is better to sell one's merchandise for a fair price, than to have it taken by main force. »

The arguments of the discreet Kadiga prevailed. The Spanish lady dried her tears, and became the spouse of Mohamed the Left-handed; she even conformed, in appearance, to the faith of her royal husband; and her discreet duenna immediately became a zealous convert to the Moslem doctrines: it was then the latter received the Arabian name of Kadiga, and was permitted to remain in the confidential employ of her mistress.

In due process of time the Moorish king was made the proud and happy father of three lovely daughters, all born at a birth: he could have wished they had been sons, but consoled himself with the idea that three daughters at a birth were pretty well for a man somewhat stricken in years, and left-handed!

As usual with all Moslem monarchs, he summoned his astrologers on this happy event. They cast the nativities of the three Princesses, and shook their heads. « Daughters, O King! » said they, « are always precarious property; but these will most need your watchfulness when they arrive at a marriageable age: at

that time gather them under your wings, and trust them to no other guardianship. »

Mohamed the Left-handed was acknowledged to be a wise king by his courtiers, and was certainly so considered by himself. The prediction of the astrologers caused him but little disquiet, trusting to his ingenuity to guard his daughters and outwit the Fates.

The three-fold birth was the last matrimonial trophy of the monarch ; his queen bore him no more children, and died within a few years, bequeathing her infant daughters to his love, and to the fidelity of the discreet Kadiga.

Many years had yet to elapse before the Princesses would arrive at that period of danger—the marriageable age : « It is good, however, to be cautious in time, » said the shrewd Monarch; so he determined to have them reared in the royal Castle of Salobreña. This was a sumptuous palace, incrustated, as it were, in a powerful Moorish fortress, on the summit of a hill that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. It was a royal retreat, in which the Moslem monarchs shut up such of their relations as might endanger their safety, allowing them all kinds of luxuries and amusements, in the midst of which they passed their lives in voluptuous indolence.

Here the Princesses remained, immured from the world, but surrounded by enjoyments, and attended by female slaves who anticipated their wishes. They had delightful gardens for their recreation, filled with the rarest fruits and flowers, with aromatic groves and perfumed bathes. On three sides the castle looked down upon a rich valley, enamelled with all kinds of culture, and bounded by the lofty Alpuxarra Mountains; on the other side it overlooked the broad sunny sea.

In this delicious abode, in a propitious climate, and under a cloudless sky, the three Princesses grew up into wondrous beauty; but, though all reared alike, they gave early tokens of diversity of character. Their names were Zayda, Zorayda, and Zorahayda; and such was their order of seniority, for there had been precisely three minutes between their births.

Zayda, the eldest; was of an intrepid spirit, and took the lead of her sisters in every thing, as she had done in entering first into the world. She was curious and inquisitive, and fond of getting at the bottom of things.

Zorayda had a great feeling for beauty; which was the reason, no doubt, of her delighting to regard her own image in a mirror or a fountain, and of her fondness for flowers, and fewels, and other tasteful ornaments.

As to Zorahayda, the youngest, she was soft and timid, and extremely sensitive, with a vast deal of disposable tenderness; as was evident from her number of pet-flowers, and pet-birds, and pet-animals, all of which she cherished with the fondest care. Her amusements, too, were of a gentle nature, and mixed up with musing and revery. She would sit for hours in a balcony, gazing on the sparkling stars of a summer's night; or on the sea when lit up by the moon; and at such times, the song of a fisherman, faintly heard from the beach, or the notes of a Moorish flute from some gliding bark, sufficed to elevate her feelings into ecstasy. The least uproar of the elements, however, filled her with dismay; and a clap of thunder was enough to throw her into a swoon.

Years rolled on smoothly; and serenely; the discreet Kadiga, to whom the Princesses were confided, was faithful to her trust, and attended them with unremitting care.

The Castle of Salobreña, as has been said, was built upon a hill on the sea-coast. One of the exterior walls straggled down the profile of the hill, until it reached a jutting rock overhanging the sea, with a narrow sandy beach at its foot, laved by the rippling billows. A small watch-tower on this rock had been fitted up as a pavilion, with latticed windows to admit the sea-breeze. Here the princesses used to pass the sultry hours of mid-day.

The curious Zayda was one day seated at one of the

windows of the pavilion, as her sisters, reclining on ottomans, were taking the siesta, or noon-tide slumber. Her attention had been attracted to a galley which came coasting along, with measured strokes of the oar. As it drew near, she observed that it was filled with armed men. The galley anchored at the foot of the tower: a number of Moorish soldiers landed on the narrow beach, conducting several Christian prisoners. The curious Zayda awakened her sisters; and all three peeped cautiously through the close jalousies of the lattice, which screened them from sight. Among the prisoners were three Spanish cavaliers, richly dressed. They were in the flower of youth, and of noble presence; and the lofty manner in which they carried themselves, though loaded with chains and surrounded with enemies, bespoke the grandeur of their souls. The Princesses gazed with intense and breathless interest. Cooped up as they had been in this castle among female attendants, seeing nothing of the male sex but black slaves, or the rude fishermen of the sea-coast, it is not to be wondered at, that the appearance of three gallant cavaliers in the pride of youth and manly beauty, should produce some commotion in their bosoms.

« Did ever nobler being tread the earth than that cavalier in crimson? » cried Zayda, the eldest of the sisters. « See how proudly he bears himself, as though all around him were his slaves! »

« But notice that one in green! » exclaimed Zorayda. « What grace! what elegance! what spirit! »

The gentle Zorahayda said nothing, but she secretly gave preference to the cavalier in blue.

The princesses remained gazing until the prisoners were out of sight; then heaving long-drawn sighs, they turned round, looked at each other for a moment, and sat down, musing and pensive, on their ottomans.

The discreet Kadiga found them in this situation; they related to her what they had seen, and even the withered heart of the duenna was warmed. « Poor youths! » exclaimed she, « I'll warrant their captivity makes many

fair and high-born lady's heart ache in their native land ! ah ! my children , you have little idea of the life these Cavaliers lead in their own country. Such pranking at tournaments ! such devotion to the ladies ! such courting and serenading ! »

The curiosity of Zayda was fully aroused ; she was insatiable in her inquiries , and drew from the duenna the most animated pictures of the scenes of her youthful days and native land. The beautiful Zorayda bridled up , and slyly regarded herself in a mirror , when the theme turned upon the charms of the Spanish ladies ; while Zorahayda suppressed a struggling sigh at the mention of moon-light serenades.

Every day the curious Zayda renewed her inquiries , and every day the sage duenna repeated her stories , which were listened to with profound interest , though with frequent sighs , by her gentle auditors. The discreet old woman at length awakened to the mischief she might be doing. She had been accustomed to think of the Princesses only as children ; but they had imperceptibly ripened beneath her eye , and now bloomed before her three lovely damsels of the marriageable age. It is time , thought the duenna , to give notice to the King.

Mohamed the Left-handed was seated one morning on a divan in one of the cool halls of the Alhambra , when a slave arrived from the fortress of Salobreña , with a message from the sage Kadiga , congratulating him on the anniversary of his daughters' birth-day. The slave at the same time presented a delicate little basket decorated with flowers , within which , on a couch of vine and fig leaves , lay a peach , an apricot , and a nectarine , with their bloom and down and dewy sweetness upon them , and all in the early stage of tempting ripeness. The monarch was versed in the Oriental language of fruits and flowers , and readily divined the meaning of this emblematical offering.

« So , » said he , « the critical period pointed out by the astrologers is arrived ; my daughters are at a marriageable age. What is to be done ? They are shut up

from the eyes of men; they are under the eyes of the discreet Kadiga :—all very good—but still they are not under my own eye, as was prescribed by the astrologers : I must gather them under my wing, and trust to no other guardianship. »

So saying, he ordered that a tower of the Alhambra should be prepared for their reception; and departed at the head of his guards for the fortress of Salobreña, to conduct them home in person.

About three years had elapsed since Mohamed had beheld his daughters, and he could scarcely credit his eyes at the wonderful change which that small space of time had made in their appearance. During the interval, they had passed that wondrous boundary line in female life which separates the crude, uninformed, and thoughtless girl, from the blooming, blushing, meditative woman. It is like passing from the flat, bleak, uninteresting plains of La Mancha, to the voluptuous valleys and swelling hills of Andalusia.

Zayda was tall and finely-formed, with a lofty demeanour and a penetrating eye. She entered with a stately and decided step, and made a profound reverence to Mohamed, treating him more as her sovereign than her father. Zorayda was of the middle height, with an alluring look and swimming gait, and a sparkling beauty, heightened by the assistance of the toilette. She approached her father with a smile, kissed his hand, and saluted him with several stanzas from a popular Arabian poet, with which the monarch was delighted. Zorahayda was shy and timid, smaller than her sisters, and with a beauty of that tender beseeching kind which looks for fondness and protection. She was little fitted to command, like her elder sister, or to dazzle like the second, but was rather formed to creep to the bosom of manly affection, to nestle within it, and be content. She drew near her father with a timid, and almost faltering step, and would have taken his hand to kiss, but on looking up into his face, and seeing it beaming with a paternal smile, the tenderness of her nature broke forth, and she threw herself upon his neck.

Mohamed the Left-handed surveyed his blooming daughters with mingled pride and perplexity; for while he exulted in their charms, he bethought himself of the prediction of the astrologers. « Three daughters! three daughters! » muttered he repeatedly to himself, « and all of a marriageable age! Here's tempting Hesperian fruit, that requires a dragon watch! »

He prepared for his return to Granada, by sending heralds before him, commanding every one to keep out of the road by which he was to pass, and that all doors and windows should be closed at the approach of the Princesses. This done, he set forth, escorted by a troop of black horsemen of hideous aspect, and clad in shining armour.

The Princesses rode beside the King, closely veiled, on beautiful white palfreys, with velvet caparisons, embroidered with gold, and sweeping the ground; the bits and stirrups were of gold, and the silken bridles adorned with pearls and precious stones. The palfreys were covered with little silver bells, that made the most musical tinkling as they ambled gently along. Woe to the unlucky wight, however, who lingered in the way when he heard the tinkling of these bells!—the guards were ordered to cut him down without mercy.

The cavalcade was drawing near to Granada, when it overtook, on the banks of the river Xenil, a small body of Moorish soldiers with a convoy of prisoners. It was too late for the soldiers to get out of the way, so they threw themselves on their faces on the earth, ordering their captives to do the like. Among the prisoners were the three identical cavaliers whom the Princesses had seen from the pavilion. They either did not understand, or were too haughty to obey the order, and remained standing and gazing upon the cavalcade as it approached.

The ire of the Monarch was kindled at this flagrant defiance of his orders. Drawing his scimeter, and pressing forward, he was about to deal a lefthanded blow, that would have been fatal to, at least, one of the gazers, when the Princesses crowded round him, and implored

mercy for the prisoners ; even the timid Zorahayda forgot her shyness , and became eloquent in their behalf. Mohamed paused , with uplifted scimeter , when the captain of the guard threw himself at his feet. « Let not your Majesty , » said he , « do a deed that may cause great scandal throughout the kingdom. These are three brave and noble Spanish knights , who have been taken in battle , fighting like lions ; they are of high birth , and may bring great ransoms. » — « Enough ! » said the King ; « I will spare their lives , but punish their audacity — let them be taken to the Vermilion Towers , and put to hard labour. »

Mohamed was making one of his usual left-handed blunders. In the tumult and agitation of this blustering scene , the veils of the three Princesses had been thrown back , and the radiance of their beauty revealed ; and in prolonging the parley , the King had given that beauty time to have its full effect. In those days people fell in love much more suddenly than at present , as all ancient stories make manifest : it is not a matter of wonder , therefore , that the hearts of the three cavaliers were completely captured ; especially as gratitude was added to their admiration ; it is a little singular , however , though no less certain , that each of them was enraptured with a several beauty. As to the Princesses , they were more than ever struck with the noble demeanour of the captives , and cherished in their breasts all that they had heard of their valour and noble lineage.

The cavalcade resumed its march ; the three Princesses rode pensively along on their tinkling palfreys , now and then stealing a glance behind in search of the Christian captives , and the latter were conducted to their allotted prison in the Vermilion Towers.

The residence provided for the Princesses was one of the most dainty that fancy could devise. It was in a tower somewhat apart from the main palace of the Alhambra , though connected with it by the main wall that encircled the whole summit of the hill. On one side it looked into the interior of the fortress , and had , at its foot ,

small garden filled with the rarest flowers. On the other side it overlooked a deep embowered ravine that separated the grounds of the Alhambra from those of the Generalife. The interior of the tower was divided into small fairy apartments, beautifully ornamented in the light Arabian style, surrounding a lofty hall, the vaulted roof of which rose almost to the summit of the tower. The walls and ceiling of the hall were adorned with arabesques and fret-work, sparkling with gold and with brilliant penciling. In the centre of the marble pavement was an alabaster fountain, set round with aromatic shrubs and flowers, and throwing up a jet of water that cooled the whole edifice, and had a lulling sound. Round the hall were suspended cages of gold and silver wire, containing singing-birds of the finest plumage or sweetest note.

The princesses had been represented as always cheerful when in the Castle of Salobreña; the King had expected to see them enraptured with the Alhambra. To his surprise, however, they began to pine, and grow melancholy, and dissatisfied with every thing around them. The flowers yielded them no fragrance, the song of the nightingale disturbed their nights' rest, and they were out of all patience with the alabaster fountain with its eternal drop-drop and splash-splash, from morning till night, and from night till morning.

The King, who was somewhat of a testy, tyrannical disposition, took this at first in high dudgeon; but he reflected that his daughters had arrived at an age when the female mind expands and its desires augment. « They are no longer children, » said he to himself, « they are women grown, and requi suitable objects to interest them. » He put in requisition, therefore, all the dress-makers, and the jewellers, and the artificers in gold and silver throughout the Zacatin of Granada, and the Princesses were overwhelmed with robes of silk, and of tissue, and of brocade, and Cashmere shawls, and necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and rings, and bracelets, and anklets, and all manner of precious things,

All, however, was of no avail; the Princesses conti-

nued pale and languid in the midst of their finery, and looked like three blighted rose-buds, drooping from one stalk. The King was at his wits' end. He had in general a laudable confidence in his own judgment, and never took advice. The whims and caprices of three marriageable damsels, however, are sufficient, said he, to puzzle the shrewdest head. So for once in his life he called in the aid of counsel.

The person to whom he applied was the experienced duenna.

« Kadiga, » said the King, « I know you to be one of the most discreet women in the whole world, as well as one of the most trustworthy; for these reasons I have always continued you about the persons of my daughters. Fathers cannot be too wary in whom they repose such confidence; I now wish you to find out the secret malady that is preying upon the Princesses, and to devise some means of restoring them to health and cheerfulness. »

Kadiga promised implicit obedience. In fact she knew more of the malady of the Princesses than they did themselves. Shutting herself up with them, however, she endeavoured to insinuate herself into their confidence.

« My dear children, what is the reason you are so dismal and downcast, in so beautiful a place, where you have every thing that heart can wish? »

The Princesses looked vacantly round the apartment, and sighed.

« What more, then, would you have? Shall I get you the wonderful parrot, that talks all languages and is the delight of Granada? »

« Odious! » exclaimed the Princess Zayda. « A horrid, screaming bird, that chatters words without ideas: one must be without brains to tolerate such a pest. »

« Shall I send for a monkey from the rock of Gibraltar, to divert you with his antics? »

« A monkey! faugh! » cried Zorayda; « the detestable mimic of man. I hate the nauseous animal. »

« What say you to the famous black singer Casem, from the royal harem in Morocco. They say he has a voice as fine as a woman's. »

« I am terrified at the sight of these black slaves , » said the delicate Zorahayda ; « besides , I have lost all relish for music. »

« Ah ! my child , you would not say so , » replied the old woman , « had you heard the music I heard last evening , from the three Spanish cavaliers , whom we met on our journey. But , bless me , children ! what is the matter that you blush so , and are in such a flutter ? »

« Nothing , nothing , good mother ; pray proceed. »

« Well ; as I was passing by the Vermilion Towers last evening , I saw the three cavaliers resting after their day's labour. One was playing on the guitar , so gracefully ! and the others sang by turns ; and they did it in such style , that the very guards seemed like statues , or men enchanted. Allah forgive me ! I could not help being moved at hearing the songs of my native country. And then to see three such noble and handsome youths in chains and slavery ! »

Here the kind-hearted old woman could not restrain her tears.

« Perhaps , mother , you could manage to procure us a sight of these cavaliers , » said Zayda.

« I think , » said Zorayda , « a little music would be quite reviving. »

The timid Zorahayda said nothing , but threw her arms round the neck of Kadiga.

« Mercy on me ! » exclaimed the discreet old woman : « what are you talking of , my children ? Your father would be the death of us all if he heard of such a thing. To be sure , these cavaliers are evidently well-bred , and high-minded youths ; but what of that ? they are the enemies of our faith , and you must not even think of them but with abhorrence. »

There is an admirable intrepidity in the female will , particularly when about the marriageable age , which is not to be deterred by dangers and prohibitions. The Princesses hung round their old duenna , and coaxed , and entreated , and declared that a refusal would break their hearts.

What could she do? She was certainly the most discreet old woman in the whole world, and one of the most faithful servants to the King; but was she to see three beautiful Princesses break their hearts for the mere tinkling of a guitar? Besides, though she had been so long among the Moors, and changed her faith in imitation of her mistress, like a trusty follower, yet she was a Spaniard born, and had the lingerings of Christianity in her heart. So she set about to contrive how the wish of the Princesses might be gratified.

The Christian captives, confined in the Vermilion Towers, were under the charge of a big-whiskered, broad-shouldered renegado, called Hussein Baba, who was reputed to have a most itching palm. She went to him privately, and, slipping a broad piece of gold into his hand, « Hussein Baba, » said she; « my mistresses, the three Princesses, who are shut up in the tower, and in sad want of amusement, have heard of the musical talents of the three Spanish cavaliers, and are desirous of hearing a specimen of their skill, I am sure you are too kind-hearted, to refuse them so innocent a gratification. »

« What! and to have my head set grinning over the gate of my own tower! for that would be the reward, if the King should discover it. »

« No danger of anything of the kind; the affair may be managed so that the whim of the Princesses may be gratified, and their father be never the wiser. You know the deep ravine outside of the walls, that passes immediately below the tower. Put the tree Christians to work there, and at the intervals of their labour, let them play and sing, as if for their own recreation. In this way the Princesses will be able to hear them from the windows of the tower, and you may be sure of their paying well for your compliance. »

As the good old woman concluded her harangue, she kindly pressed the rough hand of the renegado, and left within it another piece of gold.

Her eloquence was irresistible. The very next day

the three cavaliers were put to work in the ravine. During the noontide heat, when their fellow-labourers were sleeping in the shade, and the guard nodding drowsily at his post, they seated themselves among the herbage at the foot of the tower, and sang a Spanish roundelay to the accompaniment of the guitar.

The glen was deep, the tower was high, but their voices rose distinctly in the stillness of the summer noon. The princesses listened from their balcony: they had been taught the Spanish language by their duenna, and were moved by the tenderness of the song. The discreet Kadiga, on the contrary, was terribly shocked. « Allah preserve us! » cried she, « they are singing a love-ditty, addressed to yourselves. Did ever mortal hear of such audacity? I will run to the slave-master, and have them soundly bastinadoed. »

« What! bastinado such gallant cavaliers, and for singing so charmingly! » The three beautiful Princesses were filled with horror at the idea. With all her virtuous indignation, the good old woman was of a placable nature, and easily appeased. Besides, the music seemed to have a beneficial effect upon her young mistresses. A rosy bloom had already come to their cheeks, and their eyes began to sparkle. She made no further objection, therefore, to the amorous ditty of the cavaliers.

When it was finished, the Princesses remained silent for a time; at length Zorayda took up a lute, and with a sweet, though faint and trembling voice, warbled a little Arabian air, the burden of which was, « The rose is concealed among her leaves, but she listens with delight to the song of the nightingale. »

From this time forward the cavaliers worked almost daily in the ravine. The considerate Hussein Baba became more and more indulgent, and daily more prone to sleep at his post. For some time a vague intercourse was kept up by popular songs and romances, which, in some measure, responded to each other, and breathed the feelings of the parties. By degrees, the Princesses showed themselves at the balcony, when they could do

so without being perceived by the guards. They conversed with the cavaliers also, by means of flowers, with the symbolical language of which they were mutually acquainted: the difficulties of their intercourse added to its charms, and strengthened the passion they had so singularly conceived; for love delights to struggle with difficulties, and thrives the most hardily on the scantiest soil.

The change effected in the looks and spirits of the Princesses by this secret intercourse, surprised and gratified the left-handed King; but no one was more elated than the discreet Kadiga, who considered it all owing to her able management.

At length there was an interruption in this telegraphic correspondence: for several days the cavaliers ceased to make their appearance in the glen. The three beautiful Princesses looked out from the tower in vain. In vain they stretched their swan-like necks from the balcony; in vain they sang like captive nightingales in their cage: nothing was to be seen of their Christian lovers; not a note responded from the groves. The discreet Kadiga sallied forth in quest of intelligence, and soon returned with a face full of trouble. « Ah, my children! » cried she, « I saw what all this would come to but you would have your way; you may now hang up your lutes on the willows. The Spanish cavaliers are now ransomed by their families; they are down in Granada, and preparing to return to their native country. »

The three beautiful Princesses were in despair at the tidings. The fair Zayda was indignant at the slight put upon them, in thus being deserted without a parting word. Zorayda wrung her hands and cried, and looked in the glass, and wiped away her tears and cried afresh. The gentle Zorahayda leaned over the balcony and wept in silence, and her tears fell drop by drop among the flowers of the bank where the faithless cavaliers had so often been seated.

The discreet Kadiga did all in her power to soothe their sorrow. « Take comfort, my children, » said she; « this is nothing when you are used to it. This is the

way of the world. Ah! when you are as old as I am, you will know how to value these men. I'll warrant, these cavaliers have their loves among the Spanish beauties of Cordova and Seville, and will soon be serenading under their balconies, and thinking no more of the Moorish beauties in the Alhambra. Take comfort, therefore, my children, and drive them from your hearts. »

The comforting words of the discreet Kadiga only redoubled the distress of the three Princesses, and for two days they continued inconsolable. On the morning of the third, the good old woman entered their apartment, all ruffling with indignation.

« Who would have believed such insolence in mortal man! » exclaimed she, as soon as she could find words to express herself; « but I am rightly served for having connived at this deception of your worthy father. Never talk more to me of your Spanish cavaliers, »

« Why, what has happened, good Kadiga? » exclaimed the Princesses, in breathless anxiety.

« What has happened! — treason has happened; or what is almost as bad, treason has been proposed, and to me, the most faithful of subjects, the trustiest of dueennas! Yes, my children, the Spanish Cavaliers have dared to tamper with me, that I should persuade you to fly with them to Cordova, and become their wives! »

Here the excellent old woman covered her face with her hands, and gave way to a violent burst of grief and indignation. The three beautiful Princesses turned pale and red, and trembled, and looked down, and cast shy looks at each other, but said nothing. Meantime the old woman sat rocking backward and forward in violent agitation, and now and then breaking out into exclamations, « That ever I should live to be so insulted! — I, the most faithful of servants! »

At length, the oldest Princess, who had most spirit, and always took the lead, approached her, and laying her hand upon her shoulder, « Well, mother, » said she, « supposing we were willing to fly with these Christian cavaliers — is such a thing possible? »

The good old woman paused suddenly in her grief, and looking up, « Possible ! » echoed she ; « to be sure , it is possible. Have not the cavaliers already bribed Hussein Baba , the renegado captain of the guard , and arranged the whole plan ? But , then , to think of deceiving your father ! your father , who has placed such confidence in me ! » Here the worthy woman gave way to a fresh burst of grief , and began again to rock backward and forward , and to wring her hands.

« But our father has never placed any confidence in us , » said the eldest Princess , « but has trusted to bolts and bars , and treated us as captives , »

« Why , that is true enough ; » replied the old woman . again pausing in her grief ; he has indeed treated you most unreasonably , keeping you shut up here , to waste your bloom in a moping old tower , like roses left to wither in a flower-jar. But , then , to fly from your native land.

And is not the land we fly to , the native land of our mother , where we shall live in freedom ? And shall we not each have a youthful husband , in exchange for a severe old father ? »

« Why , that again is all very true ; and your father , I must confess , is rather tyrannical : but , what , then , » relapsing into her grief , « would you leave me behind to bear the brunt of his vengeance ? »

« By no means , my good Kadiga ; cannot you fly with us ? »

« Very true , my child ; and , to tell the truth , when I talked the matter over with Hussein Baba , he promised to take care of me , if I would accompany you in your flight : but , then , bethink you , my children , are you willing to renounce the faith of your father ? »

« The Christian faith was the original faith of our mother , » said the eldest Princess ; « I am ready to embrace it : and so , I am sure , are my sisters. »

« Right again ! » exclaimed the old woman , brightening up ; « it was the original faith of your mother ; and bitterly did she lament , on her deathbed . that she had renounced it. I promised her then to take care of your

souls, and I rejoice to see that they are now in a fair way to be saved. Yes, my children, I, too, was born a Christian, and have remained a Christian in my heart, and am resolved to return to the faith. I have talked on the subject with Hussein Baba, who is a Spaniard by birth, and comes from a place not far from my native town. He is equally anxious to see his own country, and to be reconciled to the Church; and the cavaliers have promised, that, if we are disposed to become man and wife, on returning to our native land, they will provide for us handsomely.»

In a word, it appeared that this extremely discreet and provident old woman, had consulted with the cavaliers and the renegado, and had concerted the whole plan of escape. The eldest Princess immediately assented to it, and her example, as usual, determined the conduct of her sisters. It is true, the youngest hesitated, for she was gentle and timid of soul, and there was a struggle in her bosom between filial feeling and youthful passion: the latter, however, as usual, gained the victory, and with silent tears, and stifled sighs, she prepared herself for flight.

The rugged hill, on which the Alhambra is built, was, in old times, perforated with subterranean passages, cut through the rock, and leading from the fortress to various parts of the city, and to distant sally-ports on the banks of the Darro and the Xenil. They had been constructed at different times by the Moorish Kings, as means of secretly issuing forth on private enterprises. Many of them are now entirely lost, while others remain, partly choked up with rubbish, and partly walled up; monuments of the jealous precautions and warlike stratagems of the Moorish government. By one of these passages, Hussein Baba had undertaken to conduct the Princesses to a sally-port beyond the walls of the city, where the cavaliers were to be ready, with fleet steeds, to bear the whole party over the borders.

The appointed night arrived: the tower of the Princesses had been locked up as usual; and the Alhambra was

buried in deep sleep. Towards midnight, the discreet Kadiga listened from the balcony of a window that looked into the garden. Hussein Baba, the renegado, was already below, and gave the appointed signal. The duenna fastened the end of a ladder of ropes to the balcony, lowered it into the garden, and descended. The two eldest Princesses followed her, with beating hearts; but when it came to the turn of the youngest Princess, Zorahayda, she hesitated, and trembled. Several times she ventured a delicate little foot upon the ladder, and as often drew it back, while her poor little heart fluttered more and more the longer she delayed. She cast a wistful look back into the silken chamber; she had lived in it, to be sure, like a bird in a cage; but within it she was secure: who could tell what dangers might beset her, should she flutter forth into the wide world! Now she bethought her of her gallant Christian lover, and her little foot was instantly upon the ladder; and anon she thought of her father, and shrank back. But fruitless is the attempt to describe the conflict in the bosom of one so young and tender, and loving but so timid, and so ignorant of the world.

In vain her sisters implored, the duenna scolded, and the renegado blasphemed beneath the balcony; the gentle little Moorish maid stood doubting and wavering on the verge of elopement; tempted by the sweetness of the sin, but terrified at its perils.

Every moment increased the danger of discovery, A distant tramp was heard. « The patrols are walking the rounds, » cried the renegado; « if we linger, we perish. Princess, descend instantly, or we leave you. »

Zorahayda was for a moment in fearful agitation; then loosening the ladder of ropes, with desperate resolution, she flung it from the balcony.

« It is decided! » cried she; « flight is now out of my power! Allah guide and bless ye, my dear sisters! »

The two eldest Princess were shocked at the thought of leaving her behind: and would fain have lingered, but

the patrol was advancing; the renegado was furious, and they were hurried away to the subterraneous passage. They groped their way through the heart of the mountain and succeeded in reaching, undiscovered, an iron gate that opened outlside of the walls. The Spanish cavaliers were waiting to receive them, disguised as Moorish soldiers of the guard, commanded by the renegado.

The lover of Zorahayda was frantic, when he learned that she had refused to leave the tower; but there was no time to waste in lamentations. The two Princesses were placed behind their lovers, the discreet Kadiga mounted behind the renegado, and all set off at a round pace in the direction of the pass of Lope, which leads through the mountains towards Cordova.

They had not proceeded far when they heard the noise of drums and trumpets from the battlements of the Alhambra.

« Our flight is discovered, » said the renegado.

« We have fleet steeds, the night is dark, and we may distance all pursuit, » replied the cavaliers.

They put spurs to their horses, and scoured across the Vega. They attained to the foot of the mountain of Elvira, which stretches like a promontory into the plain. The renegado paused and listened. « As yet, » said he, « there is no one on our traces, we shall make good our escape to the mountains. » While he spoke, a pale fire sprang up in a light blaze on the top of the watch-tower of the Alhambra.

« Confusion! » cried the renegado, « that fire will put all the guards of the passes on the alert. Away! away! Spur like mad, — there is no time to be lost. »

Away they dashed—the clattering of their horses' hoofs echoed from rock to rock, they swept along the road that skirts the rocky mountain of Elvira. As they galloped on, they beheld that the pale fire of the Alhambra was answered in every direction; light after light blazed on the Atalayas or watch-towers of the mountains.

« Forward! forward! » cried the renegado, with many an oath, « to the bridge; — to the bridge, before the

alarm has reached there ! »

They doubled the promontory of the mountains, and arrived in sight of the famous Puente del Pinos, that crosses a rushing stream often dyed with Christian and Moslem blood. To their confusion, the tower on the bridge blazed with lights and glittered with armed men. The renegado pulled up his steed, rose in his stirrups, and looked about him for a moment; then beckoning to the cavaliers, he struck off from the road; skirted, the river for some distance, and dashed into its waters. The cavaliers called upon the Princesses to cling to them, and did the same. They were borne for some distance down the rapid current, the surges roared round them, but the beautiful Princesses clung to their Christian knights, and never uttered a complaint. The cavaliers attained the opposite bank in safety; and were conducted by the renegado, by rude and unfrequented paths, and wild barrancos, through the heart of the mountains, so as to avoid all the regular passes. In a word, they succeeded in reaching the ancient city of Cordova; where their restoration to their country and friends was celebrated with great rejoicings, for they were of the noblest families. The beautiful Princesses were forthwith received into the bosom of the Church, and, after being in all due form made regular Christians, were rendered happy wives.

In our hurry to make good the escape of the Princesses across the river, and up the mountains, we forgot to mention the fate of the discreet Kadiga. She had clung like a cat to Hussein Baba in the scamper across the Vega, screaming at every bound, and drawing many an oath from the whiskered renegado; but when he prepared to plunge his steed into the river, her terror knew no bounds. « Grasp me not so tightly, » cried Hussein Baba; « hold on by my belt and fear nothing. » She held firmly with both hands by the leathern belt that girded the broadbacked renegado; but when he halted with the cavaliers to take breath on the mountain summit, the duenna was no longer to be seen.

« What has become of Kadiga ? » cried the Princesses in alarm.

« Allah alone knows ! » replied the renegado ; « my belt came loose when in the midst of the river , and Kadiga was swept with it down the stream. The will of Allah be done ! But it was an embroidered belt , and of great price. »

There was no time to waste in idle regrets , yet bitterly did the Princesses bewail the loss of their discreet counsellor. This excellent old woman, however, did not lose more than half of her nine lives in the stream : a fisherman, who was drawing his nets some distance down the stream , brought her to land , and was not a little astonished at his miraculous draught. What further became of the discreet Kadiga , the legend does not mention ; certain it is that she evinced her discretion in never venturing within the reach of Mohamed the lefthanded.

Almost as little is known of the conduct of that sagacious monarch when he discovered the escape of his daughters, and the deceit practised upon him by the most faithful of servants. It was the only instance in which he had called in the aid of counsel , and he was never afterwards known to be guilty of a similar weakness. He took good care, however, to guard his remaining daughter , who had no disposition to elope : it is thought , indeed , that she secretly repented having remained behind : now and then she was seen leaning on the battlements of the tower, and looking mournfully towards the mountains in the direction of Cordova ; and sometimes the notes of her lute were heard accompanying plaintive ditties, in which she was said to lament the loss of her sisters and her lover, and to bewail her solitary life. She died young , and, according to popular rumour, was buried in a vault beneath the tower ; and her untimely fate has given rise to more than one traditionary fable.

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